

THE PILOT BOOKS

I WILL REPAY



"HELP! HELP! CITIZEN DÉROULÈDE!"

See page 22

I WILL REPAY

by
BARONESS ORCZYK

ABRIDGED AND SIMPLIFIED FOR CLASS USE
WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE AUTHOR
BY
L. R. H. CHAPMAN AND L. ROBINSON

With Illustrations by
LORNA R. STEELE

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ABOUT BARONESS ORCZY

It is a surprising thing that one of the most popular novelists writing in English should be a Hungarian. Baroness Orczy came to England as a schoolgirl of fifteen to learn the language—and stayed to paint pictures which were exhibited in the Royal Academy, and to marry an English husband. She took to story-writing more or less by chance, and after some magazine work wrote a play and turned it into a novel. The play had to wait some time for production, and the novel was refused by a dozen publishers before it found a home and appeared on the same day as the play. Immediately the name of Orczy became famous, for the play and the story had the same title—*The Scarlet Pimpernel*. Since that day in 1905, millions of people have read the book, and to-day it is more popular than ever.

The Elusive Pimpernel and *I Will Repay* were later stories of the English adventurer.

The reason for the popularity of her novels is that Baroness Orczy has a rare gift of telling a story. Perhaps because of her apprenticeship as an artist, her scenes are as vivid as paintings. Her characters live and move with dashing vigour. To read her stories is to gain an unforgettable picture of the French Revolution and of England in those days.

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PROLOGUE

PARIS: 1783

I

THE DUEL

“COWARD! Coward! Coward!”

The words rang out, clear, harsh, passionate.

The young man—he was scarcely more than a boy—trembling with rage, had sprung to his feet, and, losing his balance, fell forward, clutching at the table, trying in vain to keep back the tears of shame that were blinding him.

“Coward!”

He shouted the insult again so that all might hear. His trembling hands sought the scattered cards upon the table, he collected them together quickly, nervously, and then threw them in the face of the man opposite.

The older men tried to calm him, but the young ones only smiled, quite careless of the duel which must inevitably follow, which was the only possible ending to such a quarrel as this.

A peaceful settlement was impossible. Déroulède should have known better than to speak disrespectfully of Adèle de Montcheri, when the young Vicomte de Marny's admiration for that ill-famed lady had for months past been the talk of Paris.

It was his first love-affair. Adele was very lovely; the Marnys were very rich; the Vicomte was very young; and the beautiful bird of prey was very busy plucking the wealthy young pigeon. But to him Adele was the model of all the virtues, and he would have fought against the entire aristocracy of France in defence of the reputation of this the most disreputable woman of Paris. He was a first-class swordsman, too, and his friends had already learned that it was best in his presence to avoid all reference to Adele de Montcheri.

But Deroulede was a blunderer. He was clearly not yet accustomed to the manners of that high society in which he still seemed a stranger. But for his great wealth, no doubt, he would never have been admitted within the circle of aristocratic France. But little was known of his family or of the origin of his wealth; it was only known that his father, a man of middle-class birth, had suddenly become the late King Louis' friend, and it was commonly supposed that Deroulede gold had on more than one occasion refilled His Majesty's empty treasury.

Deroulede had not sought the present quarrel. He had merely blundered into it. He knew nothing of the young Vicomte's private affairs or of his admiration for Adele, but he knew enough of the world and of Paris to be acquainted with that lady's reputation. It was not his habit to speak of women, but in this instance the conversation had turned in that direction, and when Adele's name was mentioned a shrug of Deroulede's shoulders had aroused the Vicomte's anger. A few thoughtless words; then, without further warning, the insult had been offered and the cards thrown in the older man's face.

Derouledé did not move from his seat. He sat erect and calm, his serious face perhaps a little paler. He had seen his mistake just twenty seconds too late. Now he was sorry for the boy and angry with himself, but it was too late to draw back. When the Vicomte fell forward, blind with rage, Derouledé leant towards him quite kindly and helped him to his feet. He would have given much to avoid a conflict. He would have asked the young man's pardon for his own thoughtlessness, had that been possible; but among gentlemen of those days to make an apology was to confess oneself a coward. Nothing could be done. The matter must take its course according to the rules of honour and of the duel.

The young Vicomte was quickly surrounded by a close circle of friends. His great name, his wealth, his father's influence, had opened for him every door of Versailles and Paris, and at this moment he might have had a dozen seconds to support him in the coming fight.

Derouledé for a while was left alone near the card-table. He had now risen to his feet. His dark, restless eyes wandered for a moment around the room, as if in search for a friend. Everyone in the room knew that he had not wilfully sought this quarrel, yet no one now came forward to stand by him. For the first time, perhaps, he realised fully that here, where the Vicomte was at home by right of birth, he, Déroulède, had been admitted only because of his wealth. His acquaintances were many, but his friends very few.

"Sir, will you choose your seconds?"

It was the Marquis de Villefranche. He spoke in a certain scornful tone, as if to say that Deroulède should be grateful to have the honour of cross-

ing swords with one of the noblest gentlemen of France.

"I pray you, Marquis," replied Deroulede coldly, "to make the choice for me. You see, I have few friends in Paris."

The Marquis bowed. He looked about the room for a while. The young gentlemen were crowding round De Marny, but a few older men stood in a group at the farther end of the room. It was to these that the Marquis turned and, addressing one of them, an elderly man of soldierly appearance:

"Colonel," he said, "I am requested by M. Deroulede to provide him with seconds. May I call upon you to——"

"I am not very well acquainted with M. Deroulede," replied the Colonel, "but——"

"Oh!" interrupted the Marquis. "If you prefer not to——"

"Indeed, I am entirely at M. Deroulede's service," said the Colonel, who had thrown a quick glance at the lonely figure near the card-table, "if he will accept my services."

"He will be very glad to accept, my dear Colonel," whispered the Marquis, smiling a little. "He has no friends among us, and if you and De Quettare will honour him, I think he should be grateful."

M. de Quettare was willing, and the two men went across to speak to Deroulede.

"If you will accept our services, sir," began the Colonel, "we shall be glad to act as your seconds."

"I thank you, gentlemen," replied Deroulede. "The whole thing is most stupid, and that young man is a fool; but I have been in the wrong and——"

"What!" exclaimed the Colonel. "You wish to apologise?"

He had heard something of Déroulède's middle-class ancestry. This suggestion of apology was no doubt in accordance with the customs of merchants and shopkeepers, but the Colonel gasped in astonishment at the thought. An apology? Bah! Shameful! Cowardly! Unworthy of a gentleman of honour, however wrong he might be!

But Déroulède seemed quite unconscious of the Colonel's astonishment.

"If I could avoid this duel," he said, "I would tell the Vicomte that I had no knowledge of his admiration for the lady we were discussing, and——"

"Are you so very much afraid of getting a sword-scratch, sir?" interrupted the Colonel impatiently.

"What do you mean, sir?"

"I mean that you must either fight the Vicomte de Marny to-night, or clear out of Paris to-morrow where you will in future be unable to hold up your head amongst honourable gentlemen," answered the Colonel.

But he spoke not unkindly, for, in spite of Déroulède's strange behaviour, there was nothing in his manner or appearance that suggested cowardice or fear.

"I bow to your superior knowledge, Colonel," replied Déroulède, as he silently drew his sword from its sheath.

The centre of the room was quickly cleared. The seconds measured the length of the swords and then stood behind the two opponents, slightly in advance of the spectators, who stood all round the sides of the room.

As for the spectators, they represented the flower of France, the best and noblest in name and ancestry in that year seventeen hundred and eighty-three. They had still six more years to dance and gamble, to love and fight. The cry of the starving and miserable children of Paris had not yet been heard above the sounds of music and pleasure. The storm-cloud of revolution which soon was to break over their heads, sweeping them from their palaces to prison and the guillotine, was gathering only very slowly. These tragedies of later years were hidden from the eyes of those who were present on that night when the Vicomte de Marny fought Paul Derouledé.

They watched the two men fighting, at first with careless interest. There was no doubt as to the result. De Marny came of a family that had used the sword for many centuries, but he was hot and excited not a little with wine and rage. Derouledé was lucky; he would not be killed; he would come out of the affair with nothing worse, perhaps, than a slight wound. Yet, from the first moment it was seen that he was a good swordsman, too. It was interesting to watch his sword-play; very quiet at first; no attempt to attack; only on guard, always on guard very carefully, steadily, ready for his opponent at every turn and in every circumstance.

Gradually the circle round the two men narrowed. A few whispered exclamations of admiration greeted Derouledé's skill and coolness. De Marny was getting more and more excited, the older man more quiet and reserved. A thoughtless thrust placed the Vicomte at his opponent's mercy. The next instant he was disarmed and the seconds were pressing forward to end the conflict.

Honour was satisfied. Already Deroulede had drawn back, modestly avoiding looking at the discomfiture of his disarmed antagonist. But something in the older man's manner seemed further to anger De Marny.

"This is no child's play, sir," he cried excitedly. "I demand full satisfaction."

"And are you not satisfied?" asked Deroulede. "You have fought bravely in honour of your lady. If——"

"You," shouted the boy, "you shall publicly apologise—now—at once—on your knees——"

"You are mad, Vicomte," answered Déroulède coldly. "I am willing to ask your pardon for my mistake, but——"

"An apology—in public—on your knees——"

The young man had become more and more excited. He had suffered humiliation after humiliation. The wine had got into his head. Hatred and anger blinded his judgment.

"Coward! Coward!" he shouted again and again.

His seconds tried to interpose, but he pushed them aside. He would listen to no one. He saw no one save the man who had insulted Adèle de Montcheri; and the older man's calmness and courtesy only increased the boy's rage and shame.

The noise and confusion in the room had now become general. Everybody was talking at once. Most of the younger men crowded round De Marny, doing their best to calm him. The Marquis de Villefranche declared that the affair was getting beyond the rules. No one took much notice of Deroulede, nor observed the gradual darkening of his eyes, like the gathering of a cloud heavy with rain.

"I pray you, gentlemen, let us cease the argument," he said at last in a loud, impatient voice. "The Vicomte de Marny desires a further lesson, and, by God! he shall have it. *On guard, Vicomte!*"

The crowd quickly drew back and the conversation ceased as the swords once more began to clash. And yet it was evident from the first that Derouledé merely meant once more to disarm his opponent, to give him one more lesson, a little more severe, perhaps, than the last. He was such a splendid swordsman, and De Marny was so excited, that the advantage was with him from the start.

How it all happened nobody afterwards could say. There is no doubt that the Vicomte's sword-play had become more and more wild; that he uncovered himself most carelessly whilst striking fiercely at his opponent's breast, until at last, in one of those mad, unguarded moments, he seemed actually to throw himself upon Derouledé's weapon. Derouledé tried with a lightning-swift movement of the wrist to avoid him, but it was too late, and without a sigh or a groan the Vicomte de Marny fell. The sword dropped out of his hand, and it was Derouledé himself who caught the boy in his arms.

It had all occurred so quickly and suddenly that no one had realised all that had happened until it was over and the lad was lying on the ground, his fine blue coat stained with red, and his opponent bending over him.

There was nothing more to be done. The rules demanded that Derouledé should now withdraw. He was not allowed to do anything for the boy whom he had so unwillingly sent to his death. As before, no one took much notice of him. Silence,

the silence caused by the presence of Death, fell upon all.

Deroulede walked out. His seconds, the Colonel and De Quettare, accompanied him to the door, where they met the surgeon who had been summoned some little time before to hold himself in readiness.

But the case had already passed beyond the surgeon's skill. In the brightly lighted room above the only son of the Duc de Marny lay breathing his last, whilst Deroulede, wrapping his cloak closely around him, stepped out into the dark street, all alone.

II

THE OATH

THE head of the house of Marny was at this time seventy years of age. Some ten years before the hand of illness had struck him down in the midst of his pleasures, withered him in a moment and imprisoned him, a cripple, in the huge sick-man's chair which he would leave only for his last resting-place.

Juliette de Marny was then a mere child, an old man's child, the darling of those last happy years before her mother had died. And when, four years after her mother's death, the Duc de Marny entered the final stage of his existence, that death-like life which he dragged on wearily for ten years towards the grave, Juliette became his joy, his

gleam of happiness in the midst of torturing memories.

There was a boy, too, the young Vicomte, the future Duc de Marny, who would recreate the glory of the family and make France once more echo with the brave deeds and adventures which had made the name of Marny so glorious in the past. The young Vicomte was not his father's love, but he was his father's pride, and from the depths of his huge arm-chair the sick old man would listen with delight to his news from Versailles and Paris, of the King and the beautiful young Queen and of the gaieties of the court. His sick and feeble mind would then take him back along the paths of memory to his own youth, and in the joy and pride in his son he would forget his pain and helplessness for the sake of the boy.

When they brought the Vicomte home that night, Juliette was the first to awake. She heard the noise outside the great gates, the coach slowly drawing up, the ringing of the bell for Matthieu the doorkeeper and the sound of his mutterings, for he never liked to be called up in the middle of the night to let anyone through the gates.

Somehow a strange feeling of evil at once struck the young girl. The footsteps sounded so heavy as they came across the courtyard and up the great oak staircase. She jumped out of bed and hastily wrapped a cloak round her shoulders, and slipped her feet into a pair of shoes, then opened her bedroom door and looked out.

Two men, whom she did not know, were walking upstairs; two more were carrying a heavy burden, and Matthieu was behind moaning and crying.

Juliette did not move. She stood in the doorway still as a statue. The little procession went

past her. No one saw her, for the corridors in the house of De Marny were very wide, and Matthieu's lantern threw only a dim light upon the floor.

The men stopped outside the Vicomte's room. Matthieu opened it, and then the five men disappeared within with their burden. A moment later old Pétronelle, who had been Juliette's nurse and was now her devoted servant, came to her, all bathed in tears. She had just heard the news and she could scarcely speak, but she folded the young girl, her little lamb, in her arms, weeping bitterly.

But Juliette did not cry. It was all so sudden, so awful. She, at fourteen years of age, had never thought of death; and now there was her brother in whom she had so much joy, so much pride—he was dead—and her father must be told——

The old cripple, with one foot in the grave, whose whole feeble mind, whose pride, whose last hope was centred in his son, must be told that the lad had been brought home dead.

"Will you tell him, Pétronelle?" she asked, when the violence of the old nurse's grief had calmed itself a little.

"No—no—darling, I cannot—I cannot——"

Juliette's soul—a mere child's soul it was—turned sick at the thought of the task before her. Why had God allowed this to happen? Why did He demand that a girl of her years should endure such bitterness? To lose her brother, then to carry the news to her father and witness his grief! It was unjust! She could not do it! She couldn't! She couldn't!

The distant sound of a bell aroused her from these thoughts. Her father was awake, then?

He had heard the noise, and was ringing his bell to ask for an explanation of the disturbance.

With one quick movement Juliette freed herself from her nurse's arms, and before Pétronelle could prevent it, she had run out of the room, straight across the corridor to the door opposite.

The old Duc de Marny was sitting on the edge of his bed, with his thin long legs hanging helplessly to the ground. Weak as he was, yet he had struggled to this upright position and was making efforts to raise himself still further. He, too, had heard the dull tread of men carrying a burden.

His mind flew back half a century to the days when he himself, as a half-interested spectator, had witnessed similar scenes. He knew well that sad little procession composed of servants and friends, with the surgeon walking beside that precious burden which would be laid on the bed and left to the care of the mourning family.

Who knows what pictures rose up before his enfeebled vision? But he guessed. And when Juliette entered his room and stood before him, pale and trembling, she knew that he had guessed and that she need not tell him. God had already done that for her.

Pierre, his devoted servant, dressed him as quickly as he could. The old Duc insisted on having his funeral suit, the rich suit of black velvet with white lace and diamond buttons which he had worn when they laid the great Louis the Fourteenth to his eternal rest. He fastened on his sword and tied his white hair with a great black bow. The clothes, which had suited him so well in middle life, hung somewhat loosely on his thin old body, yet he looked a noble figure as,

trying to bear himself upright, he sat in his invalid chair and was carried to the death-bed of his son.

The chair was placed close to the bed where lay the body of the young Vicomte. The Duc made no movement, nor did he utter a word or sigh. Some of those who were present at the time declared that his mind had completely given way, and that he neither felt nor understood the death of his son.

The Marquis de Villefranche, who had followed his friend to the last, took final leave of the sorrowing house.

Juliette scarcely noticed him. Her eyes were fixed on her father. She dared not look at her brother. A childlike fear had seized her, there, suddenly, between those two silent figures: the living and the dead.

But just as the Marquis was leaving the room, the old man spoke for the first time.

"Marquis," he said very quietly, "you forget you have not yet told me who killed my son."

"It was in fair fight, sir," replied the young Marquis.

"Who killed my son?" repeated the old man mechanically. "I have the right to know."

"It was M. Paul Deroulede," replied the Marquis. "But I repeat, it was in fair fight."

The old Duc sighed as if in satisfaction. Then with a polite gesture of farewell he added:

"Thanks from me and mine to you, Marquis, would seem a poor thing. Your devotion to my son is beyond human thanks. I will not detain you now. Farewell."

The Marquis passed out of the room.

"Dismiss all the servants, Juliette; I have some-

thing to say," said the old Duc, when he had gone; and the young girl, silent, obedient, did as her father bade her.

Father and sister were alone with their dead.

As soon as the last soft footsteps of the servants had died away the Duc de Marny seemed suddenly to be filled with feverish energy. With a quick movement he seized his daughter's wrist, and murmured excitedly:

"His name. You heard his name, Juliette?"

"Yes, father," replied the child.

"Paul Déroulède! Paul Déroulède! You'll not forget it?"

"Never, father!"

"He killed your brother! You understand that? Killed my only son, the hope of my house, the last descendant of the most honourable family that ever added glory to the history of France."

"But in fair fight, father!" protested the child.

"It is not fair for a man to kill a boy," retorted the old man angrily. "Déroulède is thirty. My boy was scarcely out of his teens. May the vengeance of God fall upon his murderer!"

Juliette, awed, terrified, was gazing at her father with wondering eyes. He seemed now unlike himself. She had never before seen on his face that look of hatred and that strange expression of hope and triumph as he looked at her. She was too young to understand that he was already mad, that his enfeebled reason was fast leaving the poor, aching head.

Therefore, when he took her hand and, drawing her nearer to the bed and to himself, placed it upon her dead brother's breast, she obeyed and listened without question.

"Juliette, you are now fourteen and able to understand what I am going to ask of you. If I were not chained to this miserable chair, if I were not a hopeless, helpless cripple, I would not ask anyone, not even you, my only child, to do that which God demands that one of us should do."

He paused a moment, then continued earnestly:

"Remember, Juliette, that you are of the house of Marny and that God hears you now. For you shall swear an oath before Him and me, an oath from which only death can release you. Will you swear, my child?"

"What, father?"

"That you will avenge your brother's death on his murderer?"

"But, father——"

"Swear it, my child!"

"How can I fulfil that oath, father? I don't understand——"

"God will guide you, my child. When you are older you will understand."

The old man was growing impatient.

"Surely you do not hesitate, Juliette, with your dead brother's body asking silently for revenge? You, the only Marny left now!—for from this day I too shall be as if I were dead."

"No, father," said the girl in a whisper, "I do not hesitate. I will swear, just as you bid me."

"Repeat the words after me, my child."

"Yes, father."

"Before Almighty God, who sees and hears me——"

"Before Almighty God, who sees and hears me," repeated Juliette firmly.

"I swear that I will seek out Paul Derouledé——,"

"I swear that I will seek out Paul Derouledé——,"

"And in any manner which God may show to me I will bring about his death, his ruin or dishonour, in revenge for my brother's death."

"And in any manner which God may show to me I will bring about his death, his ruin or dishonour, in revenge for my brother's death," said Juliette solemnly.

"May my brother's soul remain in torment if I should break my oath, but may it rest in eternal peace the day on which his death is avenged."

"May my brother's soul remain in torment if I should break my oath, but may it rest in eternal peace the day on which his death is avenged."

The child fell on her knees. The oath was spoken, the old man was satisfied.

He called for his servant and allowed himself quietly to be put to bed.

CHAPTER I

PARIS: 1793. THE OUTRAGE

It would have been very difficult to say why Citizen Deroulede was quite so popular as he was. Still more difficult would it have been to state the reason why he remained safe, while the whole of France was transformed into one gigantic prison that daily fed the guillotine. It was the darkest year of the Revolution, that year seventeen hundred and ninety-three. No one knew in the morning if his head would still be on his shoulders in the evening or if it would be held up by Citizen Samson, the executioner, before the eyes of the ragged crowd in Revolution Square. Yet Deroulede remained untouched. The great Marat, leader of the Revolution, once said of him:

“He is not dangerous to the Republic.”

And who could deny the truth of what Marat had said?

Deroulede had once been very rich. He had had sufficient wisdom to give away in good time the wealth which undoubtedly would have been taken from him later on. But when he gave he gave willingly, and at a time when France needed it most, and before France had learned to seize by force whatever she wanted. And France had not forgotten. An invisible power seemed to watch over Citizen Deroulede to keep him safe from enemies. The Parliament of the Republic, in

which he had his place as Deputy, trusted him too.

"He is not dangerous," they said, echoing Marat.

The people looked upon him as one of themselves, who gave generously to the poor of Paris while he had something to give. So Deroulede was allowed to go on his way.

He lived a quiet life, alone with his mother and Anne Mie, the little orphan cousin whom old Madame Deroulede had taken care of ever since she was a small child. Everyone knew his house in the Street of the Medical School, not far from the one where the great Marat himself had lived and died, the only well-built stone house in the midst of a row of evil-smelling wooden shelters.

The Street of the Medical School was narrow then, as it is now; and foully dirty, too, for while Paris was busy cutting off the heads of her children for the sake of Liberty, she had little time to trouble about cleanliness. It was a most unattractive crowd that usually thronged its uneven, muddy pavements. A clean dress was quite an unusual sight down this way, for Anne Mie seldom went out, and old Madame Deroulede hardly ever left her room. A good deal of brandy used to be drunk at the two drinking-shops, one at each end of the narrow street, and by five o'clock in the afternoon it was undoubtedly best for respectable women to remain indoors. As for the crowd of ragged, fierce-looking elderly creatures who were to be seen at the street corner, mocking at every passer-by less dirty than themselves, they could hardly be called women now.

"Oh, look! The aristo!" they shouted every time a man in decent clothes or a woman with

a clean cap and apron passed swiftly down the street.

The afternoons there were very lively. There was always something amusing to be seen; above all, the long procession of rough carts or tumbrils winding its way from the prisons to the guillotine. At one time the tumbrils carried royal ladies and gentlemen, dukes and princesses, aristocrats from every county of France. The wretched Queen Marie Antoinette was still alive in prison with her son and daughter, but in this the fifth year of the Revolution the supply of dukes, marquises, and counts was getting less. Those who had not perished at the hands of Citizen Samson were earning their living as best they might in Germany or England. A good number of these owed their lives to that mysterious Scarlet Pimpernel, that unknown Englishman who had snatched scores of victims from the very hands of the executioner.

But if aristocrats were getting scarce in Paris, there were always others to make up the daily sacrifice. So now it was the turn of deputies of the Republican Parliament, of men of letters, men of science and art, men who themselves had sent others to the guillotine a twelvemonth ago, men who had been loudest in praise of the Revolution and its Reign of Terror.

They had revolutionised the Calendar, too. Every good citizen now called this 19th day of August, 1793, the 2nd Fructidor of the Year 1 of the New Era.

At six o'clock on that afternoon a young girl suddenly turned the corner and, after looking quickly to the right and left, began deliberately to walk along the narrow street.

It was crowded just then. Groups of excited women stood talking loudly before every doorway. It was the home-coming hour after the usual spectacle in Revolution Square. The men had paused at the various drinking-shops, crowding out the women, who were left for the moment to gossip and mock at the passer-by.

At first the young girl did not seem to heed them. She walked quickly along, looking straight before her, carrying her head erect, and stepping carefully to avoid the mud which would have dirtied her dainty shoes. She wore a simple grey dress, with a fine white kerchief neatly folded across her bosom. A large hat with flowing ribbons sat above the prettiest face that ever gladdened men's eyes to see. Yet pretty as it was, there was a look of determination which made it seem hard and old for a girl of her years. Round her waist she wore the tricolour scarf of red, white and blue. The Republican colours were her safeguard. As long as she walked quietly along, no one would harm her.

Suddenly her manner seemed to change. It was just outside the large stone house belonging to Citizen-Deputy Deroulede. She had so far taken no notice of the groups of women which she had met. When they stood in her way on the footpath, she had calmly stepped out into the middle of the road. That was wise and prudent. It was easy enough to close her ears and pay no heed to insult.

But suddenly she threw up her head defiantly.

"Will you please let me pass?" she said loudly, as a ragged, dirty woman stood before her, glancing mockingly at the lace petticoat which

just peeped out beneath the young girl's simple grey frock.

"Let her pass? Let her pass? Ho! ho! ho!" laughed the old woman. "Did you know, citizeness, that this street had been specially made for aristos to pass along?"

"I am in a hurry, will you please let me pass at once?" commanded the young girl, tapping her foot impatiently on the ground.

There was the whole width of the street on her right, plenty of room for her to walk along. It seemed madness to cause a needless quarrel with this noisy group of excited females, just home from the bloody spectacle at the guillotine. And yet she seemed to do it wilfully, as if, coming to the end of her patience, her proud aristocratic heart filled with disgust for the evil-smelling crowd around her.

Half-drunken men and dirty, half-naked young boys now seemed to have sprung from everywhere.

"Oho! Look at the fine aristo!" they shouted, fingering her dress, thrusting their mocking, hateful faces close to her own.

Instinctively the young girl drew back towards the house immediately on her left. It was adorned with a porch, with an iron lantern inside hanging from its roof, and a few stone steps leading up to the stout oak door.

On these steps the young girl had taken her stand. Still proud and scornful, she faced the howling mob whose anger she had so wilfully drawn upon herself.

"Indeed, Citizeness Margot, that grey dress would suit you well!" suggested a young man with a ragged red cap and an evil face as, with

mock politeness, he stooped and with two dirty fingers raised the girl's grey frock to show the lace-edged petticoat beneath.

"It is mighty fine lace to be thus hidden away" cried an elderly woman. "Now, would you believe it, my fine young lady, but my legs are bare underneath my skirt?"

"And dirty, too, I guess," laughed another. "Soap is dear in Paris just now."

"The lace on the aristo's kerchief would pay the baker's bill of a whole family for a month!" shouted an excited voice.

Hatred was gleaming out of every eye. At any moment words might be changed for blows. The young girl seemed to know her danger, but she remained defiant and self-controlled, gradually stepping back and back up the steps, closely followed by her assailants, until she reached the doorway, where she stood with her hands held over her ears to shut out the sound of the filthy oaths that were screamed at her.

Suddenly a woman struck her straight in the face with a hard, dirty fist, and a long shout of delight and laughter greeted the blow.

Then only did the girl seem to lose her self-control.

"Help!" she shouted loudly, hammering with both hands against the oak doorway. "Help! help! Citizen Deroulede!"

But her terror was greeted with renewed laughter by her assailants. The crowd of brutes would in the next moment have torn the helpless girl from her place of shelter and dragged her into the mud; but just as half a dozen pairs of hands clutched at her skirt, the door behind her opened. She felt her arm seized firmly and herself pulled swiftly

inside the house, and the stout door quickly closed again.

She could not see her rescuer, for the hall into which he had hastily dragged her was only dimly lighted. But a voice said:

"Up the stairs; the room straight in front of you; my mother is there. Go quickly."

Turning towards the stairs, she began slowly to mount the steps. Her knees were shaking under her, her whole body was trembling with horror. Outside the shouting was becoming louder and louder. Angry fists were hammering violently against the door.

At the top of the stairs she turned for a moment and looked down into the hall. She saw his figure dimly in the gloom, one hand on the handle, his head slightly thrown back to watch her movements.

A door stood half-open immediately in front of her. She pushed it open and went within.

At the same moment he too opened the door below. The shrieks of the angry mob once more sounded in her ears. It seemed as if they had surrounded him. She wondered what was happening and how he dared face that awful crowd alone.

The room into which she had entered was gay and cheerful-looking with its dainty curtains and graceful, elegant furniture. She heard a kindly voice:

"Come in, come in, my dear, and close the door behind you. Did those wretches attack you? Never mind. My son Paul will speak to them and send them away. Come here, my dear, and sit down; there's no cause now for fear."

Without a word the young girl came forward.

The old lady had now taken the girl's hand in hers and was gently forcing her down into her arm-chair. She still continued to talk, softly and soothingly, as one might talk to a child. She was talking about Paul, and said something about Anne Mie, and then about the Parliament, and those beasts and savages, but mostly she spoke about Paul.

Outside the noise had died down. The girl felt strangely sick and tired. Her head seemed to be turning, the furniture to be dancing round her. She saw the old lady's face looking at her as through a mist. Then all went dark before her, and she knew nothing more.

CHAPTER II

CITIZEN-DEPUTY

WHEN, presently, the young girl awoke, she had plenty of leisure to think.

So this, then, was his house! She was actually a guest beneath the roof of Citizen Derouledé.

He had rescued her from the hands of the savage mob; his mother had made her welcome; a young girl, perhaps a relative of his, had waited upon her and made her happy and comfortable.

Juliette de Marny was in the house of the man whom she had sworn before God and before her father to pursue with hatred and revenge.

Lying upon the sweet-scented bed which the hospitality of the Déroulèdes had provided for her, she thought of the events of the ten years which had passed since she had sworn that oath.

After that never-to-be-forgotten scene beside the death-bed of his son, the old Duc had practically ceased to be. A silent, wasted figure, he merely existed; his mind vanished, his memory gone, a wreck whom Nature at last mercifully remembered and took away from the invalid chair which for so long had been his world.

Then followed those few years of quiet at the convent school, broken by the coming of the Revolution. Juliette was one of those who escaped condemnation. How or why, she herself could not have told. She was still very young and,

while daughters of ancient families of France only a little older than herself went to death with their parents, was allowed to live in retirement with Petronelle, her old nurse, who had remained faithful through all these years.

From the window of a little apartment in Paris—the Marny house, estates and property had been seized by the Government—she had watched the violence of the Revolution; she had heard the rumbling of the tumbrils, dragging day after day their load of victims to the guillotine. She was not yet twenty on that day when the King and his Queen were brought back in shame as prisoners to the capital from which they had tried to flee. Two years later she heard the shouts of joy in Paris when the King was sent to his death.

And during all those years her memory carried the burden of that oath from which only death might set her free: “Before Almighty God, who sees and hears me, I swear that I will seek out Paul Deroulede and in any manner which God may show to me I will bring about his death, his ruin or dishonour, in revenge for my brother’s death.”

Then came the murder of Marat, leader of the Revolution, by a young girl like herself, pale-faced Charlotte Corday.

She watched Charlotte Corday at her trial. Conquering her natural horror of such scenes and of the crowds which usually watched them, she had forced her way into the foremost row of the gallery which overlooked the Hall of the Revolutionary Court. She heard the accusation, the speech of Tinville, the Public Prosecutor, and the calling of the witnesses. Then she heard Charlotte’s young voice ringing out clearly and fear-

lessly above the murmur of voices:

“All this is unnecessary I killed Marat!”

And there in a special place given to the Citizen-Deputies she had seen Paul Deroulede, the man whom she had promised to pursue with a vengeance as complete as that which had guided Charlotte Corday's hand when she stabbed Marat to the heart. She watched him during the trial, wondering if he had any feeling of her hatred which followed him.

She listened to his speech for the accused girl and marvelled at his courage. It would have cost any other man his head to defend Charlotte Corday. But Deroulede's speech was not a defence of crime; it was an appeal for mercy.

Everyone round Juliette listened as he spoke. “It is Citizen Deroulede!” they whispered to one another.

A magnificent new hospital for sick children had been thrown open in Paris that very morning, a gift to the nation from Citizen Paul Deroulede. Surely he might be allowed to speak a little, if it pleased him.

Even the friends of the murdered leader only shrugged their shoulders. “It is Deroulede. Let him talk if he wants. Didn't Marat himself say of him that he is not dangerous?”

Charlotte Corday was condemned. All Deroulede's fine speeches could not save her.

Juliette left the court, her imagination excited by all that she had seen and heard. Charlotte Corday, the half-educated peasant-girl, should not put to shame Juliette de Marny, the daughter of a hundred dukes. With this example before her, how could she hesitate to carry out the duty which she owed to her brother and her father?

And now to wait for an opportunity!

She had been in the habit, daily, for the past month of wandering down the Street of the Medical School, supposedly to gaze at Marat's dwelling, as crowds of idlers were accustomed to do, but really in order to look at Deroulede's house. Once or twice she saw him coming or going from home. Once she caught sight of the inner hall, and of a young girl bidding him good-bye at his door. Another time she saw him at the corner of the street, helping that same young girl over the muddy pavement. He had just met her, and she was carrying a basket of provisions; he took it from her and carried it to the house. The girl was slightly deformed: hardly a hunchback, but weak and unattractive-looking, with a pale, sad face.

It was the thought of that little act of kindness which caused Juliette to provoke against herself the anger of that crowd outside his house. All that she had seen of him proved the strength of his kindness towards the weak, the poor, the unfortunate. She felt that she could count on his interference. But she had not planned it out. The idea had come to her suddenly, and she had carried it through.

Had not her father said to her that when the time came, God would show her the way?

And now she was inside the house of the man who had murdered her brother and sent her father, a poor, weak-minded old man, to his grave.

Would God's finger point again and show her the way, how best to carry out what she had sworn to do?

CHAPTER III
HOSPITALITY

"Is there anything more that I can do for you now, mademoiselle?"

The gentle, timid voice awakened Juliette from her thoughts of the past.

She smiled at Anne Mie and held out her hand towards her.

"You have all been so kind," she said. "I want to get up now and thank you all."

"Don't move unless you feel quite well."

"I am quite well now. Those terrible people frightened me so. That is why I fainted."

"They would have half-killed you, if Paul——"

"Will you tell me where I am?" asked Juliette.

"In the house of Citizen-Deputy Deroulede. He rescued you from the crowd and calmed their anger. He has such a beautiful voice that he can make anyone listen to him, and——"

"And you are fond of him, mademoiselle?" added Juliette, suddenly feeling a mist of tears rising to her eyes.

"Of course I am fond of him. He and Madame Deroulede have brought me up. I never knew my own parents. They have cared for me, and I owe everything to them."

"What do they call you, mademoiselle?"

"My name is Anne Mie."

"And mine, Juliette—Juliette Marny," she

added, with a slight hesitation. "My old nurse Pétronelle, has brought me up, and—— But tell me more about Monsieur Deroulede—I owe him so much, I'd like to know him better."

"Will you let me arrange your hair?" said Anne Mie, as if purposely avoiding a direct reply. "Monsieur Deroulede is in the salon with madame. You can see him there."

Juliette asked no more questions, but allowed Anne Mie to tidy her hair, to lend her a fresh kerchief, and generally to remove all traces of her terrible adventure. She felt puzzled. Anne Mie spoke gently and kindly enough, yet there was a strange suggestion of enmity in her manner. Juliette could not understand the girl's position in the Deroulede household. Was she a relative, or a superior servant? In these troublous times she might easily have been both. At any rate she was a childhood's companion of the Citizen-Deputy and with the instinct peculiar to women Juliette had already guessed Anne Mie's love for Déroulède. At the mere mention of his name a look of tenderness and devotion appeared on the girl's pale and unattractive face. She seemed even beautiful then.

Juliette followed Anne Mie into the salon where Deroulede was with his mother. After the first greetings with Juliette he continued a discussion with his mother, which Juliette's entrance had interrupted.

He was talking of the mob of Paris which he evidently understood so well. Incidents such as the one which Juliette had provoked had led often to outrage, sometimes even to murder; but outside Citizen-Deputy Déroulède's house everything was quiet half an hour after her escape from that howling, brutish crowd. He had merely

spoken to them for about twenty minutes and they had gone away quite quietly without even touching one hair of his head. He seemed to understand and love them, to know how to separate the little good that was in them from the hard crust of evil which hunger and misery had put around their hearts.

Then he began to consider Juliette's own circumstances.

"Pardon me, mademoiselle," he said, "but for your own sake we must guard you as a prisoner here awhile. No one would harm you under this roof, but it would not be safe for you to cross the neighbouring streets to-night."

"But I must go, monsieur. Indeed, indeed I must!" she said earnestly. "I am deeply grateful to you, but I could not leave Pétronelle."

"Who is Petronelle?"

"My old nurse, monsieur. She has never left me. Think how miserable and anxious she must be at my absence."

"Will you give me the address and allow me to take her a message?—telling her that you are safe and under my roof, where it is better that you should remain at present."

"If you think it best, monsieur," she replied.

Inwardly she was trembling with excitement. God had not only brought her to this house, but willed that she should stay in it.

"In whose name shall I take the message, mademoiselle?" he asked.

"My name is Juliette Marny."

She watched him closely as she said it, but there was in his face not the slightest sign to show that he had recognised the name. A wave of anger swept through Juliette's soul. For ten years she

had suffered the memory of that night when they brought her brother's body home and of the oath which she had sworn to her father. But he had forgotten! Her name meant nothing to him! It did not recall to him the fact that his hand was stained with blood.

After he had gone out to find and reassure Pétronelle, she was left alone with Madame Deroulede, and presently Anne Mie came in.

The three women chatted together, waiting for his return. Juliette felt well now, and almost happy. She had lived so long in the miserable little attic alone with Petronelle that she enjoyed the well-being of this home. It was not so magnificent, of course, as her father's princely palace had been, but it was in every way a refined one. The delicate china on the tall mantelpiece, the ornaments on the walls, the supper-table, which she could see through the open doorway, spread with a fine white cloth and sparkling with silver, all indicated well-bred tastes and habits of elegance which even the Revolution had not succeeded in destroying.

When Deroulede came back he brought with him an atmosphere of cheerfulness.

When walking past the hospital—his own gift to the nation—he had been loudly cheered. One or two mocking voices had asked him what he had done with the pretty aristo and her lace-edged petticoat. But that was all. Mademoiselle Marny need have no fear.

He had brought Pétronelle along with him. The old nurse's tears had melted his kindly heart. Now he offered her and her young mistress shelter until this little cloud of trouble should have passed by.

After that he suggested a journey to England.

To leave France was the only real safety, and Mademoiselle Marny had unpleasantly drawn attention to herself. No doubt, within the next few days her name would be written in the list of "Suspected." She would be safest out of the country.

But to leave France was difficult and dangerous. They must wait for an opportunity. Perhaps he might find a way to put her into the care of that Englishman who had helped so many unhappy French people to escape from the terrors of the Revolution, the man whose real name nobody seemed to know, but who preferred to be called the Scarlet Pimpernel.

CHAPTER IV

THE FAITHFUL HOUSE-DOG

AFTER supper they continued to talk.

She had openly declared herself the daughter of the Duc de Marny. When she actually named her father, and her brother killed in a duel, she saw Deroulede looking keenly and searchingly at her. Evidently he wondered if she knew everything; but she returned his gaze calmly and frankly, and he apparently was satisfied.

Madame Deroulede seemed to know nothing at all of the circumstances of that duel. Deroulede tried to draw Juliette out, to make her speak more of her brother. She replied to his questions quite openly, but in all that she said she gave no hint of the fact that she knew who had killed him.

She wanted him to know who she was. If he feared an enemy in her, there was yet time enough for him to close his doors against her.

But less than a minute later, he had renewed his offer of hospitality.

"You must stay with us," he said, "until we can arrange for your journey to England."

To Juliette it seemed that he was completely indifferent concerning the wrong he had done to her and to her father. She would have preferred to see him embarrassed, even afraid of her, when he knew who she was. She did not understand that in the natural kindness of his heart he only wished

to make amends. The quarrel with the young Vicomte de Marny had been forced upon him, the fight had been honourable and fair, and he himself had fought with every desire to spare the young man. He had been unwilling to harm her brother. He had merely been the instrument of Fate, but he felt happy that Fate might now use him again as an instrument, this time to save the sister.

While Deroulede and Juliette talked together, Anne Mie cleared the supper-table, then came and sat on a low stool at madame's feet. She took no part in the conversation, but every now and then Juliette felt the girl's eyes fixed upon her own.

When Juliette had retired with Petronelle to the bedroom which they had given her, Deroulede took Anne Mie's hand in his.

"You will be kind to my guest, Anne Mie, won't you? She seems very lonely and has suffered a great deal."

"Not more than I have," murmured the girl.

"You are not happy, Anne Mie? I thought——"

"Is a wretched, deformed creature like myself ever happy?" she said angrily, as the tears came into her eyes, in spite of herself.

"I did not think that you were wretched," he replied with some sadness, "and neither in my eyes nor in my mother's are you in any way deformed."

Her anger vanished at once. She clung to him, pressing his hand between her own.

"Forgive me! I—I don't know what's the matter with me to-night," she said with a nervous little laugh. "Let me see, you asked me to be kind to Mademoiselle Marny, did you not?"

He nodded, with a smile.

"Of course I'll be kind to her. Isn't everyone

kind to one who is young and beautiful, who has pretty eyes and soft, curly hair? Ah me! how easy is the path of life for some people! What do you want me to do, Paul? Wait on her? Be her little maid? I'll do it all, though in her eyes I shall remain both wretched and deformed, a creature to be pitied, the harmless, necessary house-dog——"

She paused a moment, said "Good night" to him, and turned to go, candle in hand. The candle flickered in the draught, illuminating the thin, white face and the ugly deformed shoulder, which Déroulède assured her he could not see.

"The necessary house-dog—who can watch and bite!" she said to herself, as she slipped out of the room. "For I do not trust you, my fine young lady, and there was something about that comedy this afternoon which, somehow, I don't quite understand."

CHAPTER V

A DAY IN THE WOODS

HOWEVER the Revolution might fill the towns of France with the Terror, it could not quite prevent Nature from working her sweet way with the country. June, July and August had received new names—they were now called Messidor, Thermidor and Fructidor, but under these new names they continued to pour forth upon the earth the same old fruits, the same flowers, the same grass in the fields and leaves upon the trees. Messidor brought its wild roses just as it had done before when they called it June. Thermidor covered the cornfields with bright red poppies; and Fructidor, though now called August no longer, laid the first wash of colour on the pale cheeks of the ripening fruits.

Three weeks had passed since she had been received by the Derouledes, and Juliette, like any other young girl in Paris, had sighed for the country and sunshine, had longed for the quiet of the woods, the music of the birds, the sight of the fields where the green just now was dotted with white marguerites.

She had left the house early. Accompanied by Pétronelle, she had been rowed along the river as far as Suresnes. They had brought some bread and fresh butter, a little wine and fruit in a basket.

and from here she meant to wander homewards through the woods.

It was all so peaceful. Even the noise of shrieking, howling Paris did not reach them. It almost seemed as if the Revolution had forgotten this little old-world village of Suresnes. Juliette spent a happy day; she loved the flowers, the trees, the birds; and Pétronelle was silent and sympathetic. As the afternoon wore on, and it was time to return, she turned homewards with a sigh.

Obedient to Madame Déroulède's suggestion, Juliette had tied a tricolour scarf around her waist, and a cap of crimson cloth with the red, white and blue rosette on one side adorned her curly head. She had gathered a huge bouquet of red poppies, white marguerites and blue lupins—Nature, too, seemed to favour the national colours—and as she wandered through the thickets she looked like some woodland spirit with Pétronelle trotting behind her like an old witch.

Suddenly she paused, for in the near distance she had heard the sound of footsteps. The next moment Paul Deroulede appeared among the trees and came rapidly towards her.

"We were so anxious about you at home!" he began. "My mother became so anxious——"

"That to quiet her fears you came in search of me!" she interrupted, with a gay, mocking little laugh. "But how did you know where to find me?"

"I didn't know," he replied quietly. "They told me you had gone to Suresnes and meant to walk homewards through the woods. That frightened me, for you will have to go through the north-west barrier, and——"

"Well?"

He smiled and looked earnestly for a moment at the dainty figure before him.

"Well, you know," he said gaily, "that tri-colour scarf and the red cap are not quite sufficient as a disguise; you look anything but a friend of the Republic. I guessed that your frock would be clean and that on your petticoat there might still be some of the lace which brought you into such trouble before."

She laughed again, and with delicate fingers lifted her pretty frock a little, displaying the lace-edged petticoat beneath.

"How careless and childish!" he said, almost roughly.

"Would you have me as coarse and dirty as your friends of the Revolution?" she retorted.

"I beg your pardon; but I have been so anxious——"

"It was unnecessary. I have already laid too many burdens on your shoulders, without wishing to add that of anxiety."

"You have laid no burden on me," he said quietly, "except one of gratitude."

"Gratitude? What have I done for you?"

"You committed a foolish, thoughtless act outside my door, and gave me the chance of freeing my conscience from a heavy burden."

"In what way?"

"I had never dared to hope that Fate would be so kind as to allow me to render a member of your family a slight service."

"I understand that you saved my life the other day, Monsieur Déroulède. I know that I am still in peril and that I owe my safety to you. But——"

"Do you also know that your brother owed his death to me?"

She closed her lips firmly, unable to reply, angry with him for having suddenly, and without any warning, opened again the hidden wound in her heart.

"I always meant to tell you," he continued somewhat hurriedly; "for it almost seemed to me that I have been cheating you these last few days. I don't suppose that you can quite realise why I tell you this; but it is a duty that I owe to you. In later years you might find out and then regret the days you spent under my roof. I called you childish a moment ago. You must forgive me. I know that you are a woman, and hope therefore that you will understand me. I killed your brother in fair fight. He provoked me as no man was ever provoked before——"

"Is it necessary, Monsieur Derouledé, that you should tell me all this?" she interrupted him, impatiently.

"I thought that you ought to know it."

"You must know, on the other hand, that I have now no means of hearing the history of this quarrel from my brother's point of view."

The moment the words had passed her lips she realised how cruelly she had spoken. Derouledé did not reply. He did not reproach her for the doubt which she cast on his sincerity. Perhaps he understood for the first time how bitterly she had felt her brother's death, and how she must be suffering now that she knew herself to be face to face with the man who had killed him.

She stole a quick glance at him through the tears which had suddenly filled her eyes. She now regretted deeply what she had said. It almost seemed to her as if she was at war with herself. On the one side was the feeling of respect and

admiration for this man, which had been growing within her during the three weeks that she had stayed as the guest of himself and his mother. On the other, the mention of her brother's name, the memory of that awful night beside his dead body and of those four years when she watched her father moving slowly to his grave, seemed to rouse in her a spirit of evil and hatred which she felt was not entirely of herself.

The woods had become silent. It was late afternoon, and they had gradually wandered farther and farther away from Suresnes towards the city. In the distance, from behind the barriers, the boom of a gun was heard.

"They are closing the barriers," he said gently, after a long pause; "I am glad I was fortunate enough to meet you."

"It was kind of you to seek me," she said humbly. "I didn't mean what I said just now——"

"I beg you, say no more about it. I can so well understand. I only wish——"

"It would be best that I should leave your house," she said quietly. "I have so ill repaid your hospitality. Petronelle and I can easily go back to our lodging."

"But you would make my mother so sad if you left her now. She has become very fond of you, and she knows, just as well as I do, the dangers that might meet you outside my house. My coarse and dirty friends of the Revolution, as you call them, have the advantage that they are loyal to me and would not harm you while you are under my roof."

"But you——" she murmured.

She felt somehow that she had wounded him

very deeply, and was angry with herself for her seeming ingratitude, and yet glad that she had the power to wound.

"You need not fear that my presence will offend you much longer, mademoiselle," he said coldly. "I can quite understand how hateful it must be to you, though I would have wished that you could believe at least in my sincerity."

"Are you going away, then?"

"Not out of Paris altogether. I have accepted the post of Governor of the Conciergerie Prison."

"Ah!—where the poor Queen——"

She checked herself suddenly. The simple words were treason against the Republic. She turned, as everyone did in those days, and cast a rapid glance behind her.

"You need not be afraid," he said; "there is no one here but Pétronelle."

"And you."

"And I? But I echo your words. Poor Marie Antoinette!"

"You pity her?"

"How can I help but pity her?"

"But you are a Deputy of that horrible Parliament of the Republic, who will try her, condemn her, execute her as they executed the King."

"I am of the Parliament of the Republic. But I will not condemn her, nor share in such a crime. I go as Governor of the Conciergerie Prison, to help her, if I can."

"But it means your life if you befriend her!"

"As you say, mademoiselle, my life, if I befriend her," he repeated.

She looked at him with renewed curiosity in her gaze.

How strange men were in these days! Paul

Derouède, Deputy of the Republican Parliament, the idol of the Paris mob, was about to risk his life for the woman whom he had helped to cast down from the throne.

How large was his sympathy! His pity did not end with the starving poor of Paris; it had reached Charlotte Corday, though it had failed to save her; and now it extended to the miserable imprisoned Queen.

"When do you leave?" she asked.

"To-morrow night."

She said nothing more. They had reached the edge of the wood, and gradually as she walked the flowers she had gathered fell out of her hands one by one. First the blue lupins, followed by the white marguerites. The red poppies with their long thin stalks clung to her hands longer than the rest. At last she let them fall too, singly, like great drops of blood. She could already hear the familiar noises of the city, the drums, the loud, excited shouting of the mob who stood round the gates of Paris at this time every evening, waiting to see some important capture, perhaps that of a hated aristocrat trying to escape from the people's revenge.

Derouède was absorbed in his thoughts and seemed not to heed her. At the barrier, however, he roused himself and took out the special passes which alone enabled Juliette and Pétronelle to re-enter the city. He himself, as Citizen-Deputy could come and go as he wished.

Juliette trembled as the great gate closed behind her. It seemed to shut out even the memory of this happy day in the woods.

She did not know Paris very well, and wondered where lay that gloomy Conciergerie Prison where

Queen Marie Antoinette was living her last days. But as they crossed the bridge she began to recognise the towers of the great city: Notre Dame, the Cathedral, the dark outline of St. Gervais, and behind her the Palace of the Louvre. How small her own tragedy seemed in the midst of this great drama which was being played around her. Her oath, her own revenge, what were they in comparison with that great, flaming Revolution which had swept away a throne and brought its vengeance to thousands.

She felt small and petty, ashamed of the pleasure she had felt in the woods, ashamed of the feeling of admiration and pity for the man who had done her and her family so deep an injury, which she seemed too feeble, too hesitating to avenge.

She thought again of that night when they brought her brother's body home and felt her purpose receive new strength. The man beside her, who had wronged her and hers, had himself pointed out the way by which she could keep her oath and bring about his ruin.

CHAPTER VI

THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL

It was some few hours later. The ladies sat in the drawing-room, silent and anxious.

Soon after supper a visitor had called and had remained alone with Paul Déroulède in the latter's study for the past two hours.

A tall, somewhat lazy-looking figure, he was sitting at a table, face to face with the Citizen-Deputy. On a chair beside him lay a heavy coat covered with the dust of a long journey, but he himself was dressed in clothes that indicated the most elegant taste and the most perfect of tailors. Unlike Déroulède, he was of great height, with fair hair and good-natured blue eyes, and as he spoke there was just a trace of foreign accent in his pronunciation, a certain lengthening of the o's and the a's that would have betrayed the Englishman to an observant listener.

The two men had been talking quietly and earnestly for some time, the tall Englishman watching his friend keenly, with an amused smile round the corners of his firm mouth and jaw. Deroulede was pacing restlessly to and fro.

"But I don't understand how you managed to reach Paris, my dear Blakeney!" said Deroulede at last, placing an anxious hand on his companion's shoulder. "Our Government has not forgotten the Scarlet Pimpernel."

"Oh, I took care of that," replied Blakeney with his short, pleasant laugh. "Indeed, to be sure that they might not have forgotten I sent Tinvillle a little note this morning to inform him that the Scarlet Pimpernel is already in Paris."

"You are mad, Blakeney!"

"Not altogether, my friend. I assure you that it was not mere foolishness that caused me to let your Public Prosecutor know of my arrival. I had an idea of what you and some of your mad friends are up to, so I crossed from England a few days ago in the *Daydream* just to see if I might have my share of the fun."

"Fun, you call it?" asked the other bitterly

"Shall I, then, call it what it really is? A mad, senseless tragedy, with but one result—the guillotine for you all."

"What makes you think that?"

"My dear Déroulède, the Queen is in prison she is about to be tried; if she is tried she will be condemned. I have reasons for thinking that a certain group of hot-headed gentlemen, with yourself at their head, are about to attempt her rescue, which I may tell you is the most stupid, senseless plan that was ever conceived in the brain of a Frenchman."

Deroulede smiled.

"Does it not seem strange, Blakeney, that you of all people should sit there and condemn anyone for planning mad, senseless things?"

Blakeney stood up and stretched his long, lazy limbs.

"Let me tell you, friend, that the Scarlet Pimpernel never attempted the impossible; and to try to drag the Queen out of the hands of your

murderous Government now is attempting the impossible."

"And yet we mean to try."

"I know it. I guessed it, and that is why I came; that is also why I sent my little note to the Committee of Public Safety, signed with the mark they know so well: *The Scarlet Pimpernel*."

"But why?"

"Well, isn't the result obvious? Robespierre, Danton, Tinville, Merlin and the rest of them will all be busy looking for me. When your attempt fails, as it is certain to fail, they'll put it down to me, and you may—I only suggest you *may*—avoid the consequences of your folly and escape safely out of France with my help."

"But in the meantime they will discover you, and they'll take care not to let you escape as you have escaped so many times before."

Blakeney laughed gaily.

"Not at all, my friend! My life has become valuable to me. There is someone over the water now who will weep if I don't return. No! no! never fear. They'll not catch the Scarlet Pimpernel this time."

And this strong, firm face seemed to soften at the thought of the beautiful wife, over in England, who was waiting anxiously for his safe return.

"And yet you'll not help us to rescue the Queen?" asked Deroulede with some bitterness.

"I am ready to help in nothing that is impossible. But I will help to get you all out of the hole, when you have failed."

"We'll not fail," answered the other hotly.

Sir Percy Blakeney went close up to his friend and placed his hand upon the latter's shoulder.

“Will you tell me your plans?”

“There are not many of us in it,” began Deroulede, “although many will be in sympathy with us. We have plenty of money, of course, and also the necessary disguise for the royal lady.”

“Yes?”

“I have asked for and obtained the post of Governor of the Conciergerie Prison. I go there to-morrow. In the meantime I am making arrangements for my mother and others who are dependent on me to leave France immediately. I am still very popular. My family can go about quite freely, but I must get them out of France, in case—in case——”

“Of course. I understand.”

“As soon as I am assured that they are safe in England, my friends and I can carry out our plans. We hope to get the Queen away disguised in one of the uniforms of the National Guard. As you know, it will be my duty to make the final inspection every evening in the prison and to see that everything is safe for the night. Two guards watch all night in the room next to that occupied by the Queen. Usually they drink and play cards all night long. I shall wait for an opportunity to drug their brandy; then a blow on the head will make them senseless. That should be easy enough, and after that——”

“Well? After that, my friend, how will you pass the guard twenty-five strong outside the Conciergerie?”

“I, as the Governor, have the right to come and go as I please. The Queen will follow me dressed as one of my guards.”

"Indeed! As one of your guards, and wrapped to the eyes, I suppose, in a long cloak to hide the female figure beneath! What you propose to do would not deceive a child. I have been in Paris but a few hours, and yet already I have realised that there is not one citizen within its walls who does not at this moment suspect some other citizen of plotting for the Queen's escape. No figure wrapped in a cloak will ever be allowed to pass the gates of Paris."

"But others have escaped. Why not the Queen?"

"Because she is a woman and has been a queen. Can you take hold of her and push her into the bottom of a dirty cart and pile sacks of potatoes on top of her? I have done that with others and succeeded in getting them away; but could you do it, or anything like it, to Marie Antoinette? Her pride means more to her than life. She'd betray herself—and you—in a moment rather than submit to a loss of her dignity."

"But would you leave her to her fate?"

"What else can we do? Do you think you need appeal to the sense of honour of my League? There are twenty of us, heart and soul in sympathy with your mad schemes. The poor, poor Queen! But you are sure to fail and we shall fail with you."

"We should succeed if you helped us. At one time you used to say proudly: 'The League of the Scarlet Pimpernel has never failed.'"

"Because it attempted nothing which it could not carry out. But since you press me so hard, I'll have to think about it."

And he laughed that somewhat empty laugh of his which had deceived the clever men of two

countries into thinking that Sir Percy Blakeney was a fool.

Deroulede went up to the heavy oak desk which stood against the centre of one of the walls. He unlocked it and drew out a bundle of papers.

"Will you look through these?" he asked, handing them to Blakeney.

"What are they?"

"Different plans that I have prepared in case my original plan should not succeed."

"Burn them, my friend," said Blakeney. "Have you not yet learned the lesson of never putting things on paper?"

"I can't burn these. You see, I shall not be able to have long conversations with the Queen. I must give her my plans in writing, so that she may study them and not fail through lack of knowledge on her part."

"These papers, if found, would send you, untried, to the guillotine."

"I am careful and, at present, no one suspects me. Moreover, among the papers is a collection of passports, which I have needed several months to collect. I got them together gradually, one by one, so as not to arouse suspicion. Now I am ready for——"

He suddenly paused. A look in his friend's face had given him a swift warning.

He turned, and there in the doorway stood Juliette, graceful, smiling and a little pale in the flickering light of the candles.

Blakeney was quietly and keenly watching the young girl as she stood in the doorway. She seemed to hesitate and then said:

"Madame Deroulede sent me. She says the hour is getting late and she is very anxious.



THERE IN THE DOORWAY STOOD JULIETTE

M. Deroulede, would you come and reassure her? ”

“In a moment, mademoiselle,” he replied lightly, after first throwing the papers back into the desk. “My friend and I have just finished our talk. May I have the honour to present him?—Sir Percy Blakeney, a traveller from England. Blakeney, this is Mademoiselle Juliette de Marny, my mother’s guest.”

CHAPTER VII

A WARNING

SIR PERCY bowed very low in the graceful but exaggerated manner of the time. He had not said a word since the first look of warning with which he had drawn his friend's attention to the young girl in the doorway. And, noiselessly as she had come, Juliette glided out of the room again.

For a while there was silence. Déroulède was locking up his desk and slipping the keys into his pocket.

"Shall we join my mother for a moment, Blake-ney?" he said, moving towards the door.

"I shall be proud to pay my respects to Madame Déroulède," replied Sir Percy; "but before we close the subject, I think I'll change my mind about those papers. If I am to help in any way, I think it will be best for me to look through them and give you my opinion of your schemes."

Derouledé looked at him keenly for a moment, a slight frown on his face.

"Certainly," he said at last, going up to his desk. "I'll stay with you while you read them through."

"No, not to-night, my friend," said Sir Percy lightly; "the hour is late, and madame is waiting for us. They'll be quite safe with me, if you'll entrust them to my care."

Déroulède seemed to hesitate.

"Perhaps you cannot quite trust me?" laughed Sir Percy.

"No, it's not that, Blakeney," said Derouledé quietly at last. "There's no mistrust in me. All the mistrust is on your side."

"Indeed!——" began Sir Percy.

"No, no, please don't try to explain. I could not fail to see the suspicion which sprang into your eyes at Mademoiselle de Marny's sudden appearance. I understand and value your friendship, but I must tell you how unjust is your mistrust of one of the purest and best women that ever walked on God's earth."

"Oho! so that's it, is it? Paul Derouledé is in love!"

"Yes. Madly, blindly, stupidly in love, my friend," said Déroulède with a sigh. "And hopelessly, too, I fear!"

"But why hopelessly?"

"She is the daughter of the late Duc de Marny, one of the oldest names in France; a Royalist to the backbone——"

"Ah! So that explains the Citizen-Deputy's sympathy for the Queen!"

"No, you wrong me there. I'd have tried to save the Queen, even if I had never known and never learned to love Juliette. But you see now how unjust were your suspicions."

"Had I any?"

"Of course you had. Don't deny it. Didn't you urge me to burn those papers a moment ago? You called them useless and dangerous, and now you want——"

"I still think them useless and dangerous, and by reading them would wish to confirm my opinion."

“ But if I were to put them into your keeping now I would seem to be mistrusting her.”

“ You are in love, my dear Deroulede, and love has stolen away your reason ! ”

“ How can I help it? I have lived under the same roof with her for three weeks now. I have begun to understand what a saint is like.”

“ Very well, then. Leave the papers in your desk, and trust her if you will. But remember that your idol may have feet of clay.”

CHAPTER VIII

ANNE MIE

THAT night, when Blakeney, wrapped in a cloak, was walking down the Street of the Medical School towards his own lodging, he suddenly felt a hand upon his sleeve.

Anne Mie stood beside him, her pale face peeping up at the tall Englishman from a dark hood closely tied under her chin.

"Monsieur," she said timidly, "pardon me for following you. I—I would wish to have five minutes' talk with you—may I?"

He looked down at her with great kindness, and his strong face softened at the sight of the poor deformed shoulder, the pinched look of the young mouth and her pitiful expression of helplessness.

"Indeed, mademoiselle," he said gently, "you make me very proud; if I can serve you in any way, I pray you command me. But," he added, seeing Anne Mie's somewhat frightened look, "this street is scarcely fit for private conversation. Shall we try and find a better place?"

He led her first past the Luxembourg Gardens, once the great pleasure-ground of the aristocrats but now transformed into a township of gigantic furnaces where cannons were forged for the defence of the Republic; then past St. Michel Square towards the river. It was quieter there.

"I think it would be best not to sit down."

suggested Blakeney, "and wiser for you to throw your hood away from your face."

Then, seeing that the young girl seemed to find it difficult to say what lay on her mind, he said kindly: "You wished to speak to me about Paul Deroulede. He is my friend, you know."

"Yes; that is why I wished to ask you a question," she replied.

"What is it?"

"Who is Juliette de Marny, and why did she seek an entrance into Paul's house?"

"Did she seek it, then?"

"Yes. On the day when Paul rescued her from the mob, I saw the scene from the balcony. At the time I didn't understand. I merely thought that she had been stupid and wilful. But since then I have thought much about it. She angered the mob of the street purposely, just at the very moment when she reached M. Deroulede's door. She called for help and knew that he would respond. It was a trick to get into his house."

She spoke rapidly and excitedly now, throwing off all shyness and timidity. Blakeney was forced to check her, lest she might draw towards them the attention of a passer-by.

"Well? And now?" he asked, for the young girl had paused, as if ashamed of her excitement.

"And now she stays in the house, on and on, day after day," continued Anne Mie, speaking more quietly. "Why does she not go? She is not safe here in France. She belongs to the most hated of all classes—the idle, rich aristocrats. Paul has several times suggested plans for her journey to England. Madame Deroulede loves her and would not like to part from her, but it

would be obviously wiser for her to go. And yet she stays. Why?"

"Perhaps because she is in love——"

"Because she is in love with Paul?" interrupted Anne Mie angrily. "No, no; she does not love him—I sometimes think she hates him. And yet sometimes I am not sure. Her eyes light up when he comes, and she does not seem at ease when he goes. She always spends a long time over her dressing when we expect him home for dinner. But if she loves him, it is a strange kind of love; it is a love that will not be for his good."

"Why should you think that?"

"I can't tell you my reasons. I don't know. I can't explain it. But I know it. I feel it."

"But perhaps your own love for Paul Deroulede has blinded you. Ah! you must pardon me, mademoiselle, if my words have wounded you. Yet I wish you to know how deep is my sympathy with you, and how great my desire to render you a service if I can."

"I was about to ask a service of you, monsieur."

"Then command me, I beg of you."

"You are Paul's friend. Persuade him that that woman in his house is a danger to him."

"He would not listen to me."

"Oh! a man always listens to the advice of another."

"Except on one subject—the woman he loves."

He had said the last words very gently, but very firmly. He was deeply, tenderly sorry for the poor unattractive girl who was doomed to be the witness of the saddest of a woman's tragedies, the passing away of her own happiness in love. But he felt that at this moment the kindest act would be to let her know the complete truth. He

knew that Paul Derouledé's heart was given completely to Juliette de Marny. Like Anne Mie, he mistrusted this beautiful girl and her strange silent ways, but he knew also that no sin which Juliette might commit would ever tear her out of the heart of his friend; that if, indeed, she turned out to be false or even treacherous, she would still hold in Derouledé's soul a place which no one else would ever fill.

"You think he loves her?" asked Anne Mie at last.

"I am sure of it."

"And she? Does she love him?"

"Ah! I do not know."

"She is false, I tell you, and is planning to betray him."

"Then all we can do is to wait."

"Wait?"

"Yes, and watch carefully, earnestly, all the time. But I give you my word that Derouledé shall come to no harm."

"Give me your word that you'll part him from that woman."

"No. That is beyond my power. A man like Paul Derouledé only loves once in life, but when he does it is for always."

Once more she was silent, pressing her lips together, as if afraid of what she might say.

"It will be your task, too, to watch over Paul," he added; "with your friendship to guard and protect him we need have no fear for his safety, I think."

"Yes, I will watch," she replied quietly.

And gently he led the unhappy girl back towards the Street of the Medical School.

CHAPTER IX

JEALOUSY

AT the door of Deroulede's house Blakeney parted from Anne Mie who let herself in with her own key. She closed the heavy door noiselessly and went upstairs softly, hoping not to be seen. But as she reached the top of the stairs she met Paul Deroulede. He had just come out of his room, and was still fully dressed.

"Anne Mie!" he said, with such an obvious cry of pleasure that the young girl, with beating heart, paused a moment as if hoping to hear that cry again, feeling that indeed he was glad to see her, that he had been uneasy because of her long absence.

"Have you been anxious?" she asked at last.

"Anxious!" he exclaimed. "Little one, I did not dare to go to bed when I realised that you had gone out so late as this, and all alone."

"How did you know?"

"Mademoiselle de Marny knocked at my door an hour ago. She had gone to your room to speak to you, and, not finding you there, she searched the house and finally in her anxiety came to me. We did not dare to tell my mother. I won't ask where you have been, Anne Mie, but another time remember, little one, that the streets of Paris are not safe, and that those who

love you suffer deeply when they know you to be in peril."

"Those who love me!" murmured the girl under her breath.

"Could you not have asked me to come with you?"

"No; I wanted to be alone. The streets were quite safe, and—and I wanted to speak with Sir Percy Blakeney."

The girl, unaccustomed to lying, had let out the truth, almost against her will.

"With Blakeney?" he exclaimed in astonishment. "Why, what in the world did you want to say to him?"

"I thought he could help me, for I was in trouble."

"And you went to him rather than to me?" said Derouledé in a tone of gentle reproach, still puzzled at this extraordinary behaviour.

"My anxiety was about you, and you would have mocked me for it."

"Indeed, I should never mock you. But why should you be anxious about me?"

"Because I see you walking blindly into great danger and because I see you trusting those whom you had best mistrust."

He frowned a little and bit his lip to check the angry word that was on the tip of his tongue.

"Is Sir Percy Blakeney one of those whom I had best mistrust?" he asked.

"No."

"Then, my dear, there is no cause for your anxiety. He is the only one of my friends whom you have not known intimately, and you know that you can trust and love all those who are around me now."

He took her hand; it was trembling. From the tone of his last words she knew that he had guessed what was passing in her mind, and was now deeply ashamed of what she had done. For the past three weeks she had been tortured by jealousy, but at least she had suffered quite alone; no one had been allowed to know the bitterness in her heart. And now, by her own actions, two men knew her secret. Both were kind and sympathetic; but Paul would not heed her warning and Blakeney had been unable to help her.

She would have given her life at this moment to tear out from Deroulede's mind the knowledge of her own jealousy. She hoped at least that he had not guessed her love. She tried to read his thoughts, but in the dark corridor, only dimly lighted by the candles in Deroulede's room beyond, she could not see the expression of his face; but the hand which held hers was warm and tender. She felt that he knew everything and pitied her. With a hasty good night, she fled down the corridor and locked herself in her room, alone at last with her own thoughts.

CHAPTER X
DENUNCIATION

WHILE Anne Mie lay in her room thinking bitterly of the events of the past few hours, Juliette in another room was on her knees by the side of her bed, her soul torn by a struggle between opposing powers.

On the one side duty, her dead brother, her father—above all, her religion and the oath she had sworn before God; on the other pity, honour and gratitude to the host whose bread she had eaten.

She tried to crush memory, tried to forget that awful midnight scene ten years ago, her brother's body, her father's hand holding her own as he begged her to do that which he was too old, too feeble to accomplish. But the words still rang in her ears from the past: "Before Almighty God, who sees and hears me, I swear——"

Had she not repeated those words firmly and of her own free will, with her hand resting on her brother's breast, and God Himself looking down upon her, for she had called upon Him to listen?

"I swear that I will seek out Paul Deroulede, and in any manner which God may show to me I will bring about his death, his ruin or dishonour. May my brother's soul remain in torment if I should break my oath, but may it rest in eternal peace the day on which his death is avenged."

Almost it seemed to her as if her father and

brother were now standing by her side as she knelt and prayed to God for strength to carry out her task. For she firmly believed that it was God who at last, after ten years, had shown her the way to avenge her brother. He had brought her to this house. He had caused her to see and hear part of the conversation between Blakeney and Deroulede. If she were to reveal the secret which he had allowed her to learn, there could only be one result for Paul Deroulede: disgrace first, the hasty trial, the Hall of Justice and the guillotine.

She tried to put aside her personal feelings of love or hatred, to consider herself simply as the instrument of God to punish him for the crime he had committed ten years ago.

Had Charlotte Corday considered herself when with her own hand she put an end to Marat?

Juliette remained on her knees for hours. She heard Anne Mie come home, and Deroulede's voice of welcome. That was perhaps the most bitter moment of this conflict in her soul, for it brought to her mind the remembrance of those others who would suffer, too, and who were innocent—Madame Deroulede and poor Anne Mie. They had done no wrong, and yet how heavily would they be punished!

And then for a while a kindlier, more human judgment would gain the upper hand. She would rise from her knees, dry her eyes, prepare quietly to go to bed and to forget all about the sacred duty which she had sworn to fulfil. But how could she forget? And the next moment she would sink back on her knees again, murmuring passionate prayers for forgiveness to her father, her brother, her God.

With the first break of dawn Juliette at last rose from her knees, bathed her burning eyes and head, tidied her hair and dress, then sat down at the table and began to write. She wrote out carefully and with a steady hand that denunciation of Citizen-Deputy Déroulède which is now an historical document of France. You may still see it to-day at the Carnavalet Museum in its glass case; but its yellow paper and faded ink reveal nothing of the struggle which had taken place in Juliette de Marny's soul before she finally willed herself to write it:

To the Representatives of the People now sitting in Assembly at the Republican Parliament.

You trust and believe in the Representative of the People: Citizen-Deputy Paul Deroulede. He is false, and a traitor to the Republic. He is planning, and hopes to effect, the escape of Marie Antoinette. Haste! O Representatives of the People! Proofs of this statement, papers and plans, are still in the house of the Citizen-Deputy Deroulede.

This statement is made by one who knows.

1. *The 23rd Fructidor.*

When her letter was written she read it through carefully, made one or two little corrections which are still visible in the document, then folded the letter, and, wrapping a dark cloak and hood round her, she slipped noiselessly out of her room.

The house was all quiet and still. She ran quickly downstairs, and, as rapidly as she could,

pushed back the heavy bolts of the front door and slipped out into the street.

Already the city was beginning to stir. As Juliette turned her steps towards the river, she met a crowd of workmen on their way towards the Luxembourg Gardens where the furnaces were already ablaze and the smiths at work forging the cannons of the Republic. A little farther on a procession of market carts, laden with vegetables and fruit, was making its way to the centre of the city.

The walls of most of the houses bore the great patriotic motto: "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity or Death." But on the wall of the Louvre, the palace of the old kings of France, was a great notice bearing the words: "The Law Concerning Suspected Traitors." Below the notice was a wooden box with a slit at the top. It was here that she stopped.

This law was the latest invention for securing the safety of the Republic. Henceforth anyone might become a traitor at one word of denunciation from a hidden, unnamed enemy. Thus one half of the nation was set to spy upon the other, and the wooden box, with its slit, was put there ready to receive accusations from one man against another.

Had Juliette paused but for a moment, had she stopped to read the notice setting forth all the details of this terrible law, she would even then have turned back and fled from the wooden box, as she would have done from a poisonous reptile or from the pestilence.

But she did not stop. She drew the letter from her bosom, and with a steady hand dropped it into the box. The thing was done. Nothing she could henceforth say or do, no prayers, no

miracles even, could now undo her action or save Paul Deroulede from trial and the guillotine.

One or two groups of people hurrying to their work had seen her drop the letter into the box. They shrugged their shoulders, and passed on their way. Those who habitually crossed this spot were used to such sights. That wooden box, with its mouthlike slit, was a monster that was constantly fed, yet was still asking for more.

Having done the deed Juliette turned, and as rapidly as she had come, so she went back to her temporary home.

A home no more now ; she must leave it at once, to-day if possible. She could no longer touch the bread of the man she had betrayed. She would not appear at breakfast. She could plead a headache as her excuse, and in the afternoon Petronelle should pack her things.

CHAPTER XI

“ VENGEANCE IS MINE ”

THE pretence of a headache enabled Juliette to keep in her room the greater part of the day. She would have liked to shut herself out from the entire world during those hours which she spent face to face with her own thoughts and her own sufferings.

At every sound in the great silent house she started up, trembling with fear, covering her ears with her hands, thinking that the doom which she had herself prepared had already fallen upon the heads of these people who had shown her nothing but kindness.

She could not think of Madame Deroulede or of Anne Mie without the bitterest shame.

And what of him—the man whom she had betrayed to a tribunal which would have no mercy?

Juliette dared not think of him.

But the hours passed away slowly and still nothing happened. At length the silence and loneliness became unendurable. She called to Pétronelle and ordered her to pack their boxes.

“ We leave for England to-day,” she said.

“ For England ? ” gasped Petronelle, who was feeling very happy and comfortable in this hospitable house and was not desirous of leaving it.

“ So soon ? ”

“ Why, yes ; we have talked of it for some time.

We cannot remain here always. My cousins and my aunt are over in England. We shall be among friends, Pétronelle, if we ever get there.”

“ If we ever get there ! ” sighed Pétronelle ; “ we have very little money, my dear, and no passports. Have you thought of asking Monsieur Deroulede for them ? ”

“ No, no,” replied Juliette ; “ I’ll see to the passports, Pétronelle. Sir Percy Blakeney is English ; he’ll tell me what to do.”

“ Do you know where he lives, my dear ? ”

“ Yes. I heard him tell Madame Deroulede last night that he is lodging with an innkeeper called Brogard at the Sign of the Broken Pitcher. I’ll go and seek him, Pétronelle. I am sure he will help me. He’ll get us our passports, I know, and advise us as to the best way to proceed. You must stay here and get all our things ready. I shall not be long.”

She took up her cloak and hood and, throwing them over her arm, slipped out of the room.

Deroulede had left the house earlier in the day. She hoped that he had not yet returned, and ran down the stairs quickly so that she might go out unnoticed.

The house was quite peaceful and still. From the kitchen, at some little distance from the hall, Anne Mie’s voice was heard singing an old song. Juliette paused a moment. A bitter ache had seized her heart, and her eyes filled with tears as she looked round the walls of this house which had sheltered her so hospitably these three weeks past. Now she was about to leave it, homeless, friendless, having turned against the one hand which in this time of great peril had been extended to her in kindness and love.

Conscience was beginning to rise up against her. For the first time she began to realise the full meaning of what she had done. She closed her eyes to shut out the shameful vision of her crime; she tried to forget this home which her treachery had ruined. A great sob broke from her heart. The misery of it was more than she could bear. Pity her, if you can! She was so young, so weak. She had grown up with that one idea of duty to accomplish, of a most solemn oath to fulfil. She had had no one to help or advise her. She had prayed for release, but the Voice from above had remained silent. Now it was done and the end had come. The three weeks of peace and happiness were over and she was left desolate, alone with her sin.

Scarcely knowing what she did, she fell on her knees, there, near the door which she was about to leave for ever.

"Juliette!"

At first she did not move. It was his voice calling from the study behind her. Then she heard his footsteps. She started, and jumped to her feet, hastily drying her eyes. She would have fled out of the house now, but it was too late. He had already come out of his study and, seeing her there on her knees weeping, he came quickly forward.

"You are going out, mademoiselle?" he said courteously as, wrapping her cloak around her, she was turning to the door.

"Yes, yes," she replied; "a small errand, I——"

"Is it anything I can do for you?"

"No."

"If——" he added, with the hesitation of one who is about to ask a great favour, "if your

errand could suffer a little delay, might I beg the honour of your presence in my study for a few moments?”

“My errand cannot be delayed, Citizen Déroulède,” she said as calmly as she could, “and perhaps on my return I might——”

“I am leaving almost immediately, mademoiselle, and I would wish to bid you good-bye.”

He stood aside to allow her to pass either out through the street door or across the hall to his study.

There had been no reproach in his voice towards the guest who was thus leaving without a word of farewell. Perhaps if there had been any, Juliette would have rebelled. As it was, she turned away from the door and stepped past him into his room. The study was dim and cool, for the room faced the west and the shutters had been closed in order to keep out the hot August sun. At first she could hardly see anything. He followed her into the room, leaving the door slightly open.

“It is kind of you, mademoiselle,” he said gently, “to honour me so. You see, I am leaving this house to-day and I had a selfish longing to hear your voice bidding me farewell.”

Juliette’s eyes were gradually becoming accustomed to the semi-gloom around her. She could see him distinctly now, standing close beside her in an attitude of deepest respect.

The study was as usual neat and tidy, indicating the orderly habits of a man of action and energy. On the floor was a travelling-bag, ready as if for a journey, and on the top of it a large letter-case of stout leather, secured with a small steel lock. Juliette’s eyes fixed themselves upon this case with a look of horror. Obviously it con-

tained Deroulede's papers, the plans for Marie Antoinette's escape, the passports of which he had spoken the day before to his friend, Sir Percy Blakeney—the proofs, in fact, which she had offered in support of her denunciation of the Citizen-Deputy.

After his first words he had said nothing more. He was waiting for her to speak; but she had lost her voice; it seemed to her as if hands of steel were gripping her throat, choking her, smothering the words she wished to speak.

"Will you not wish me God-speed, mademoiselle?" he repeated gently.

"God-speed?" she thought. How could she God-speed him to his trial and to the guillotine? He was going thither, though he did not know it, and was even now trying to take the hand which had deliberately sent him there.

At last she made an effort to speak:

"You are not going for long, Citizen-Deputy?"

"In these dangerous times, mademoiselle," he replied, "any farewell might be for ever. But I am actually going for a month to the Conciergerie to take charge of the unfortunate prisoner there."

"For a month!" she repeated mechanically.

"Oh, yes!" he said with a smile. "You see, our Government is afraid to trust anyone for long in this matter of the Queen, so a new Governor of the prison is appointed every month. I shall be in charge during this coming month. I hope to return soon, but—who can tell?"

"In any case then, Citizen Deroulede, the farewell I bid you to-night will be a very long one."

"A month will seem a century to me," he said earnestly, "since I must spend it without seeing you, but——"

He looked long and searchingly at her. He did not understand her in her present mood, so nervous and wild did she seem, so unlike the happy, light-hearted girl who had made his house so bright these past few weeks.

“ You misunderstand me, Citizen Deroulede,” she said at last, hurriedly. “ You have all been very kind—very kind—but Petronelle and I can no longer accept your hospitality. We have friends in England, and many enemies here——”

“ I know,” he interrupted quietly; “ it would be very selfish if I were to suggest that you should stay here an hour longer than is necessary. I fear that after to-day my roof may no longer shelter you. But will you allow me to arrange for your safety, as I am arranging for that of my mother and Anne Mie? My English friend, Sir Percy Blakeney, has a yacht in readiness off the coast. I have already seen to your passports and to all the arrangements for your journey, and Sir Percy, or one of his friends, will see you safely on board the yacht. He has given me his promise that he will do this, and I trust him as I would trust myself. For the journey through France, the use of my name will prevent your being harmed; and, if you will allow it, my mother and Anne Mie will travel in your company. Then——”

“ I pray you stop, Citizen Deroulede,” she suddenly interrupted, excitedly. “ You must forgive me, but I cannot allow you thus to make any arrangements for me. Pétronelle and I must do as best we can. All your time and trouble should be spent for the benefit of those who have the right to it, whilst I——”

“ You speak unkindly, mademoiselle, there is no question of right.”

“And you have no right to think——” she continued, with growing nervous excitement, drawing her hand hurriedly away, for he had tried to seize it.

“Ah! pardon me,” he interrupted earnestly, “there you are wrong. I have the right to think of you and for you—the right which I possess by my great love for you.”

“Citizen-Deputy!”

“Juliette, I know that my words seem foolish. I know your De Marny pride, and how much you despise those like myself who have sympathy for the miserable, starving people of France. But have I said that I hope to gain your love? I do not think I have ever even dreamed of such happiness. Yet I would not let you go out of my life without telling you of that which has made every hour of the past few weeks a paradise for me—my love for you, Juliette.”

He spoke in that low voice of his, and with those soft, tender tones with which she had once heard him pleading before the court for the life of poor Charlotte Corday. Yet he was not pleading for himself, for any selfish wish, for his own happiness, but only that she should know his love and, knowing it, have pity in her heart for him and allow him to serve her to the end.

He did not say anything more for a while; he had taken her hand, which she no longer withdrew from him, for there was sweet pleasure in feeling his strong fingers close over hers. He pressed his lips upon her hands; and when again she tried to withdraw them from him, he would not let them go.

“Do not go away yet, Juliette,” he begged. “Think! I may never see you again; but when

you are far from me—in England, perhaps—will you try sometimes to think kindly of one who loves you so dearly? ”

Every word he spoke had its echo within her soul. She would have stilled, if she could, the beating of her heart which went out to him at last with all the strength of the love which she could no longer deny. She tried in vain not to hear his tender words, to forget his presence, not to know that he was there—he, the man whom she had betrayed, whom in her folly she had thought that she hated, but whom she now knew that she loved better than oath, better than father or brother, better than life itself.

Now, at this moment, she began to understand that vengeance belongs not to human hands. She had prayed to Heaven for guidance, and Heaven had remained silent. Now, too late, she seemed to hear the voice of Heaven speaking to her, clear and pitiless:

“ Vengeance is mine ! I will repay ! ”

CHAPTER XII
IN THE NAME OF THE REPUBLIC

“ OPEN, in the name of the Republic ! ”

At first, to Anne Mie who was still singing over her work in the kitchen, there seemed nothing unusual in the loud ringing of the front-door bell. She pulled down her sleeves over her thin arms, smoothed down her cooking apron, and then ran to see who the visitor might be.

As soon as she had opened the door, however, she understood.

Five men were standing before her, four of whom wore the uniform of the National Guard. The fifth wore the tricolour scarf edged with gold, showing that he was a person of high authority in the service of the Republic.

This man immediately stepped into the hall, followed by his four companions, who at a sign from him stood on either side of Anne Mie and prevented her from carrying out her purpose, which was to run to the study and warn Déroulède of his danger.

That it was danger of the most deadly kind she never doubted for a moment. One glance at the five men had been enough to tell her their errand. Their manner, their rough word of command, their air of authority as they crossed the hall—everything indicated that the purpose of their visit was



"OPEN, IN THE NAME OF THE REPUBLIC!"

to search the house of Citizen-Deputy Deroulede.

Anne Mie would have screamed out in warning, had she dared, but she knew well enough that this would have been a foolish act. She felt that Paul would wish her to remain calm.

The leader of the five—he with the tricolour scarf—had already crossed the hall, and was standing outside the study door. It was his voice which first roused Déroulède from his thoughts, his dreams, his present happiness:

“Open, in the name of the Republic!”

Deroulede did not immediately drop Juliette’s hand, which a moment ago he had been covering with kisses. He held it to his lips once more, very gently, as if giving a last eternal farewell, then he stood up and turned to the door.

He was very pale, but there was neither fear nor surprise expressed in his eyes.

“Open, in the name of the Republic!”

Once more, for the third time—according to custom—the words rang out clear, distinct, commanding.

In that one moment, whilst those seven words were spoken, Deroulede’s eyes turned swiftly towards the heavy letter-case which held his condemnation, and a wild, mad thought of escaping entered his mind.

The plans for the escape of Marie Antoinette, the various passports suitable for any disguise the unfortunate Queen might require—all these papers were more than sufficient proof of treason against the Republic. He could already hear the accusation against him, could see the filthy crowd of Paris dancing wildly around the tumbril bearing him towards the guillotine; he could hear their insults hurled against him. And from all this he

would have escaped if he could, if it had not been too late.

It was but a second, or less, whilst the words were spoken outside his door, that thoughts of escape passed through his mind. He even made a movement, as if to seize the letter-case and to hide it upon his person. But it was large and heavy; it would be sure to attract attention. He caught Juliette's eyes fixed upon him with an intensity which at that same moment revealed to him the depths of her love. Then his moment of weakness was gone; he was once more quiet, firm, the man of action, accustomed to meet danger boldly. With a quiet shrug of the shoulders, he dismissed all thought of the letter-case and its contents, and went to the door.

Already, as no reply had come to the third word of command, it had been thrown open forcibly from outside, and Déroulède found himself face to face with the five men.

"Citizen Merlin!" he said calmly, as he recognised the leader.

"Himself, Citizen-Deputy," replied the latter, with a mocking smile, "at your service."

Anne Mie, still in the hall, had heard the name and felt her soul turn sick at the sound of it.

Merlin! The Minister of Justice himself! Merlin, the author of the infamous Law of Suspected Traitors, which set man against man, father against son, brother against brother, and friend against friend, which set every man as a spy against his neighbour.

Merlin smiled joyfully to himself when he saw Déroulède standing there. This was his moment of triumph. He had always hated the popular Citizen-Deputy, and for two years now had used

all the influence he possessed in order to bring Deroulede under a cloud of suspicion. But it was difficult to bring about, for Deroulede had the ear of the populace. No one knew better than he how to speak to the Paris mob.

But now at last Merlin was having his way. A denunciation against Deroulede, written by an unnamed person, had reached Tinville, the Public Prosecutor, that day. Tinville and Merlin were fast friends, so the latter had easily obtained the privilege of being the first to proclaim to his hated enemy the news of his downfall.

He stood at the door facing Deroulede for a moment, enjoying the present situation to the full. The light from the hall struck full upon the figure of the Citizen-Deputy. Behind him the study, with its closely drawn shutters, appeared almost dark.

Merlin turned to his men, and still delighted with his position of a cat playing with a mouse, he pointed to Deroulede with a smile and a shrug of the shoulders.

"Look at him," he said, spitting contemptuously on the floor, "the aristocrat seems not to understand that we are here in the name of the Republic. There is a very good proverb, Citizen-Deputy," he added, once more addressing Deroulede, "which you seem to have forgotten, and that is that the pitcher which goes too often to the well gets broken at last. You have plotted against France for the past two years, but the day of reckoning has come at last. The Parliament of the Republic wants to know what treason you are planning between these four walls, and it has sent me to find out all there is to know."

"At your service!" said Deroulede, quietly

stepping aside in order to make way for Merlin and his men.

Resistance was useless and he knew that it was best to submit with dignity.

During this time, Juliette had neither moved nor uttered a sound. Little more than a minute had passed since the moment when the first order to open in the name of the Republic had sounded through the stillness of the house. Deroulede's kisses were still hot upon her hand, his words of love were still ringing in her ears.

And now this awful, deadly peril, which she with her own hand had brought on the man she loved!

Deroulede stood facing Merlin. The latter was giving orders to his men, preparatory to searching the house; and there, just on the top of the travelling-bag, lay the letter-case, obviously containing those papers about which the day before she had overheard Déroulède speaking to his friend, Sir Percy Blakeney.

The next moment she had seized it and thrown it upon the sofa. Then, seating herself beside it, she spread the folds of her skirts over the case, hiding it entirely from view.

Merlin, in the hall, was ordering two men to stand one on each side of Deroulede and two more to follow him into the room. Now he entered it himself. He had not seen Juliette's movement, but he heard the rustling of a woman's skirts as she seated herself upon the sofa.

"You are not alone, Citizen-Deputy, I see," he said, as his snake-like eyes lighted on the young girl.

"My guest, Citizen Merlin," replied Deroulede as calmly as he could—"Citizeness Juliette Marny."

Merlin smiled to himself and gazed for a moment mockingly at Juliette. Only that morning he had held in his fingers the piece of paper on which a girlish hand had written the denunciation against Citizen-Deputy Deroulede. It needed now only a moment for him to arrive at his conclusion with regard to this so-called guest in the Deroulede household.

"His lover, clear enough!" he muttered to himself. "A quarrel, I suppose. She's tired of him and wants to get rid of him. Or, perhaps he's tired of her, and she's accused him out of spite."

Satisfied with this explanation of the affair, he was quite ready to be amiable to Juliette. Moreover, he had caught sight of the travelling-bag and he felt sure that the girl's eyes were directing his attention towards it.

"Open those shutters!" he commanded. "This place is as dark as night."

One of the men obeyed immediately, and as the bright August sun came streaming into the room Merlin once more turned to Deroulede.

"Information has been laid against you, Citizen-Deputy," he said, "by an anonymous writer, who states that you have just now in your possession letters and other papers intended for the prisoner Marie Antoinette; and the Committee of Public Safety has entrusted me and these citizens with the duty of seizing such letters and papers and of making you answerable for their presence in your house."

Deroulede hesitated a moment before replying. As soon as the shutters had been opened and the room flooded with light he had at once perceived that his letter-case had disappeared, and guessed

that Juliette had concealed it about her person. It was this which caused him to hesitate. His heart was filled with gratitude towards her for her noble effort to save him, but he would have given his life at this moment to undo what she had done. Through her action she had made herself one with himself; if the case were found upon her person, she would be accused of being a partner in his treason, or at any rate of shielding a traitor.

He dared not look again towards her, for he felt that at this moment her life as well as his own might depend on the movement of an eyelid; and Merlin's keen, narrow eyes were fixed upon him in eager search for a sign which might betray fear or prove an admission of guilt.

"Well," sneered Merlin after a while, "you do not reply, Citizen-Deputy."

"The accusation is unworthy of a reply," answered Deroulede quietly; "my services to the Republic are well known. I should have thought that the Committee of Public Safety would scorn to read a denunciation from an unnamed writer against a faithful servant of the people of France."

"The Committee of Public Safety knows its own business best, Citizen-Deputy. If the accusation proves untrue, so much the better for you. You do not propose," he added, with a sneer, "to offer any resistance while these citizens and I search your house?"

Without another word Deroulede handed his bunch of keys to the man by his side. Any kind of opposition or even of argument would have been worse than useless.

Merlin ordered the travelling-bag and the desk to be searched, and in a moment the men were busy turning out the contents of both on to the floor.

But the desk contained only a few private household accounts and notes for speeches which Deroulede had at various times delivered in the Republican Parliament. Among these were notes in pencil for his great speech in defence of Charlotte Corday, but there was nothing else of any importance. The travelling-bag itself was packed with nothing more than the few necessities for a month's stay at the Conciergerie. The men under Merlin's guidance sought in vain for something that might be considered as treasonable correspondence with the unfortunate prisoner there.

Merlin, while his men were busy with the search, was sitting in one of the big leather-covered chairs on the arms of which he was drumming impatiently with his dirty fingers. It was evident that he would be greatly disappointed if his errand proved fruitless. His narrow eyes wandered from time to time towards Juliette, as if asking for her help and guidance. She, understanding his thoughts about her, responded to his look and played her part with cunning. With a glance here and there she directed the men in their search.

Yet nothing was found, and Merlin began to feel for the first time a shadow of doubt.

He knew quite well that Citizen-Deputy Deroulede was not a man to be lightly dealt with. Mere suspicion was enough to bring an ordinary person to the guillotine, but it would be insufficient in his case even to bring him before the court. Unless there were proofs—certain, positive proofs—of Paul Deroulede's treason, the Public Prosecutor would not dare to bring an accusation against him. The mob of Paris would rise to defend its idol. That was the strength of Deroulede's position: the people of Paris whom he had so often

helped, and above all the women of Paris whose children he had caused to be tended in the hospitals he had built for them. The poor of Paris had not yet forgotten, and Merlin knew it. So nothing could be done against Deroulede without complete, undeniable proofs.

The men had now finished searching the room; every scrap of paper had been examined, and in vain.

Merlin, half-blind with anger, had jumped to his feet.

"Search him!" he ordered.

Deroulede set his teeth and made no protest. He buried his nails into the palms of his hands in order to prevent himself striking his enemy in the face. He submitted and stood calmly while the pockets of his coat were turned inside-out by the rough hands of the soldiers.

Still nothing was to be found.

All the while Juliette had remained silent. Merlin was completely deceived? He was quite sure in his mind that it was she who had denounced Deroulede and was satisfied as to her motive. Therefore he did not interfere with her, but contented himself with watching for the indications which he believed she was giving him and which would at last lead him to what he wanted to find. And Juliette, understanding Merlin's thoughts, played her part, her mind centred on one thing only: to save the man she loved from the consequences of her own betrayal of him.

When Deroulede's pockets had been searched, he turned towards Juliette again with a look of enquiry in his snake-like eyes. She shrugged her shoulders slightly and looked towards the door. It seemed to Merlin that she was saying to him

"There are other rooms in the house besides this one. Try them. The proofs are there. It is for you to find them."

Merlin had been standing between her and Deroulede, so the latter saw nothing of the signs that passed between them.

"You are cunning, Citizen-Deputy," said Merlin now, turning towards him, "and no doubt you have cleverly hidden away what I am looking for. But you must understand that the Committee of Public Safety will not be satisfied with a mere examination of your study. I and these citizen soldiers will now pay a visit to the other parts of your house."

"As you please," replied Deroulede.

"And you will accompany us, Citizen-Deputy," commanded the other.

The four men of the National Guard formed themselves into a line outside the study door; with a nod of his head, Merlin ordered Deroulede to pass out also; then he too prepared to follow. At the door he turned, and once more faced Juliette.

"As for you, citizeness," he whispered, "if you have brought us here on a fool's errand, you will pay dearly for it, remember. Do not leave the house without permission. I may have some questions to put to you."

CHAPTER XIII

A WAY OUT

JULIETTE waited a moment or two, until the footsteps of the six men died away on the oak staircase. She had but a few moments more to find a way out of the danger into which she herself had brought the man she loved.

Merlin and his men would soon return, and while the letter-case remained in Déroulède's study he was in immediate danger at the hands of his enemy. At first she thought of hiding it within her dress, but a second's thought showed her the uselessness of such a move. What if Merlin ordered her to be searched! No, there was only one way, to get out of this room with the papers. Not a trace of them must be found here in the study, if he were to remain above suspicion.

She rose from the sofa, and peeped through the door. The hall was now deserted; from the left side of the house, on the floor above, the heavy footsteps of the soldiers and Merlin's brutal voice could be distinctly heard. Juliette listened for a little while, trying to understand what had happened. Yes; they had all gone to Deroulede's bedroom, which was on the extreme left at the end of the first-floor corridor. There might be just time to accomplish what she had now resolved to do.

As best she could, she hid the heavy leather case in the folds of her skirt. If she were caught on

the stairs by one of the men nothing could save her or Déroulède; but by remaining where she was discovery was at last absolutely certain. She chose to take the risk.

She slipped noiselessly out of the room and up the great oak stairs. Merlin and his men, busy with their search in Deroulede's bedroom, paid no heed to what was going on behind them; Juliette arrived on the corridor, and turned sharply to her right, running silently along the thick carpet, and thence quickly to her own room.

All this had taken less than a minute to accomplish. The very next moment she heard Merlin's voice ordering one of his men to stand at attention at the top of the stairs; but by this time she was safe in her room. She closed the door noiselessly.

Petronelle, who had been busy all the afternoon packing her young mistress's things, had fallen asleep. Unconscious of the terrible events which were rapidly succeeding each other in the house, the old woman was snoring peacefully in her arm-chair.

Juliette, for the moment, took no notice of her. As quickly as she could, she was tearing open the heavy leather case with a sharp pair of scissors, and very soon the contents were scattered before her on the table. One glance at them was sufficient to convince her that most of the papers would undoubtedly, if found, send Deroulede to the guillotine. Most of the correspondence was in his own handwriting. She had, of course, no time to examine it more closely, but instinct told her that it was highly dangerous.

She gathered the papers into a heap, tearing some of them into strips; then she spread them out upon the ash-pan in front of the large stove which stood



"IT'S NOTHING, ONLY A FEW OLD LETTERS I AM BURNING."

in the corner of the room. Unfortunately, this was a hot day in August. Her task would have been far easier if she had wished to destroy this bundle of papers in the depth of winter, when there was always a good fire burning in the stove.

On the wall facing her bed a small oil lamp was kept always alight. Juliette took it between her fingers, carefully, lest the tiny flame should be put out. First she poured the oil over the fragments of paper in the ash-pan, then with the wick she set fire to them. The oil helped the paper to burn quickly, but the smell caused old Petronelle to awake.

"It's nothing, Pétronelle," said Juliette quietly; "only a few old letters I am burning. But I want to be alone for a few moments—will you go down to the kitchen until I call you?"

Accustomed to do as her mistress commanded, Pétronelle rose at once to her feet.

"I have finished putting away your things, my jewel. There, there! why didn't you tell me to burn your papers for you? Look, you have soiled your pretty hands, and——"

"Sh! sh! Pétronelle!" said Juliette impatiently, and she gently pushed the talkative old woman towards the door. "Run to the kitchen now, quickly, and don't come out of it until I call you. And, Pétronelle," she added, "you will see soldiers about the house, perhaps."

"Soldiers! Good God, have mercy on us!"

"Don't be frightened, Petronelle. But they may ask you questions."

"Questions?"

"Yes; about me."

"My treasure, my jewel," exclaimed Petronelle in alarm, "have those devils of soldiers——?"

"No, no; nothing has happened as yet, but in these times there is always danger, you know."

"Good God! What shall we do?"

"Nothing will happen if you try to keep quite calm and do exactly as I tell you. Go to the kitchen and wait there until I call you. If the soldiers come in and question you, if they try to frighten you, remember that we have nothing to fear from men, and that our lives are in God's hands."

All the while that Juliette spoke, she was watching the heap of paper being gradually reduced to ashes. She tried to fan the flame as best she could, but some of the correspondence was on tough paper and was slow in burning. Petronelle, tearful but obedient, prepared to leave the room. As she opened the door there was a sudden draught, and the last flickering flame died out in the ash-pan. Juliette, seeing that Petronelle had gone, hastily turned over the few half-burnt fragments of paper that were left. In none of them had the writing remained readable. All that was dangerous to Deroulede was reduced to dust.

There remained only the leather case, with its sides torn open, an indestructible thing. After a second's hesitation, Juliette threw it among her dresses which Petronelle had packed in her bag.

Then she too went out of the room.

CHAPTER XIV

A HAPPY MOMENT

THE search in Citizen-Deputy Deroulede's bedroom had been as fruitless as that in his study, and Merlin was beginning to have vague doubts as to whether he had been fooled.

His manner towards Déroulède had undergone a change. He had become a little more polite and was making clumsy attempts to appear friendly. For this he had good reason. Although he had not yet given up all hope of finding proofs of Deroulede's treason, he knew that unless such proofs were found both he and the Public Prosecutor would be severely blamed for this day's work, if the popular Citizen-Deputy, relying on the support of the people of Paris, chose to take his revenge.

Merlin, too, had already decided that if he failed, somebody was going to suffer. He would not leave this house entirely empty-handed. If not Deroulede, the denounced, the victim must then be Juliette, the denouncer.

But he was still seeking for the proofs.

He had now allowed Deroulede to join his mother in the sitting-room, and had himself gone to the kitchen in search of Anne Mie, whom he had previously caught sight of in the hall. There he also found old Petronelle, whom he could almost frighten out of her mind, but from whom he was quite unable to obtain any useful information.

Petronelle was too stupid to be dangerous, and Anne Mie was too much on the alert. But, with the vague idea that a cunning man might choose the most unlikely places for hiding things, he was searching the kitchen from floor to ceiling.

In the sitting-room Deroulede had done his best to reassure his mother, who, in her turn, was forcing herself to be brave and trying not to show by her tears how deeply she feared for the safety of her son. As soon as he was freed from the presence of the soldiers, he hastened back to his study, only to find that Juliette had gone and that the letter-case had also disappeared. Not knowing what to think, trembling for the safety of the woman he loved, he was just considering whether he would seek her in her own room, when she came towards him across the corridor.

When she saw him, she put a finger to her lips and whispered:

“Sh! sh! the papers are destroyed, burned.”

“And I owe my safety to you!”

He said the words with his whole soul; an infinity of gratitude filled his heart, and joy and pride that it was she who had been able to save him from his danger. He felt that she had never been so beautiful, so desirable as at this moment.

But at his words she had grown paler than she was before. Her large, dark eyes were fixed upon him with an intensity of gaze which almost startled him. He thought that she was about to faint and, taking her gently, led her into the sitting-room. There she sank into a chair, as if utterly weary and exhausted, while he, forgetting his danger, forgetting Merlin and all else besides, knelt at her feet and held her hands in his.

When he looked up at her again, two tears were

slowly trickling down her pale cheeks.

"Juliette!" he murmured at last, as his soul went out to her in a passionate appeal for her love.

She trembled at his words, knowing that she, who had betrayed him, had no right to listen to words of love. But who shall blame her for listening?

Madame Déroulède, at the farther end of the room, was softly muttering a few prayers.

They were all alone, these two, in a new and beautiful world. She forgot the earth, forgot reality, her oath, her betrayal, and began to feel that it was good to live, good to love, and good to have at her feet this one man in all the world whom she could fondly worship.

Who shall repeat the words that he whispered? Enough that she listened and that she smiled; and he, seeing her smile, felt happy.

CHAPTER XV

DETECTED

THE opening and shutting of the door roused both of them from their dreams.

Anne Mie, pale, trembling, with eyes looking wild and terrified, had run into the room.

Derouledé sprang to his feet. In a moment he thrust away all thoughts of his own happiness at the sight of the poor girl's distress. He went quickly towards her, and would have spoken to her, but she ran past him up to Madame Derouledé, as if she were filled with some unexplainable terror.

"Anne Mie," he said firmly, "what is it? Have those devils dared——"

The realities of the situation had come rushing back upon him, and he began to blame himself bitterly for having forgotten in his few moments of joy with Juliette those others who looked up to him for help and protection.

He knew the evil temper of the brutes who had been set upon his track; he knew that low-minded Merlin and his foul ways. How could he have been so thoughtless as to leave Anne Mie and Petronelle alone with him even for a few moments?

But Anne Mie quickly reassured him.

"They have not troubled us much," she said, trying to calm herself. "Pétronelle and I were together, and they made us open all the cupboards

and uncover all the dishes. They then asked us many questions."

"Questions? Of what kind?" asked Derouledé.

"About you, Paul," replied Anne Mie, "and about Madame, and also about—about your guest."

Derouledé looked at her closely, astonished at the strange manner in which she was speaking. She was evidently labouring under some strong excitement, and in her hand she was clutching a piece of paper.

"Anne Mie! child," he said very gently, "you seem quite upset—as if something very terrible had happened. What is that paper you are holding, my dear?"

Anne Mie gazed down upon it. She was obviously making efforts to maintain her self-control.

As for Juliette, at the first sight of Anne Mie, she seemed to have been turned to stone. She sat upright, still as a statue, her eyes fixed upon the girl as if upon a pitiless judge about to pronounce sentence of life or death.

Instinct, that keen sense of coming danger, had told her that within the next few seconds her shame and guilt would be made known to her lover.

"What is that paper? Will you let me see it, Anne Mie?" repeated Déroulède.

"Citizen Merlin gave it to me just now," began Anne Mie more quietly; "he seems very angry at finding nothing against you, Paul. They were a long time in the kitchen, and now they have gone to search my room and Pétronelle's; but Merlin—oh! that awful man!—he seemed like a beast mad with disappointment.

"Yes, yes."

"I don't know what he hoped to learn from me, for I told him that you never spoke to your mother

or to me about your political business, and that I was not in the habit of listening at keyholes."

"Yes. And——"

"Then he began to speak of—of our guest. But, of course, there again I could tell him nothing. He seemed to be puzzled as to who had denounced you. He spoke about an anonymous denunciation which reached the Public Prosecutor early this morning. It was written on a piece of paper, without a signature, and was thrown into the public box, it seems, and——"

"It is indeed very strange," said Deroulede. "I never knew that I had a hidden enemy. I wonder if I shall ever find out——"

"That is just what I said to Citizen Merlin," replied she.

"What?"

"That I wondered if you, or—or any of us who love you, will ever find out who your hidden enemy is."

"But it was wrong of you to talk so much with such a brute, little one."

"I didn't say much, and I did so to keep him in a good temper, as he seemed to wish to talk on that subject."

"Well? And what did he say?"

"He laughed, and asked me if I would very much like to know."

"I hope you said 'No,' Anne Mie?"

"Indeed, indeed, I said 'Yes,'" she retorted with sudden energy, her eyes fixed now upon Juliette, who still sat pale and silent, watching every movement of Anne Mie from the moment when she began to tell her story. "Would I not wish to know who is your enemy, Paul—the creature who was treacherous enough to try to deliver you into

the hands of those merciless villains? What wrong had you done to anybody? "

"Sh! Hush, Anne Mie! you are too excited," he said, smiling a little at her desire to discover what seemed to him a trifle—the name of his enemy.

"I am sorry, Paül. But how can I help being excited when I speak of such faithlessness, such treachery as Merlin suggested? "

"Well? And what did he suggest? "

"He did more than suggest," whispered Anne Mie, "he gave me this paper—the denunciation which reached the Public Prosecutor this morning. He thought that one of us might perhaps recognise the handwriting."

Then she paused, some five steps away from Derouledé, holding out towards him the crumpled paper which until now she had clutched with determination in her hand. Derouledé was about to take it from her, and just before he had turned to do so, his eyes had lighted on Juliette.

She had said nothing, but she, too, had risen to her feet and had reached Anne Mie's side before him.

It was all a flash, and there was dead silence in the room, but in that one-hundredth part of a second Déroulède had read guilt in Juliette's face. Her soul seemed suddenly to stand before him in all its misery and shame.

It was as if fire had suddenly descended from heaven, burying beneath its flames all his love and happiness. She was no longer there. The woman that he had loved had ceased to be.

There stood before him a beautiful woman to whom he had offered all the treasures of his love, whom he had saved, sheltered and protected, and

who had repaid him thus. She had forced an entry into his house; she had spied upon him, lied to him, betrayed him. The moment was too awful, too sudden for him to think of her motives. He knew nothing of her oath. He did not even think at this moment that once, long ago, in fair fight, he had killed her brother. Past, present and future all seemed blotted out and he was left with nothing but the thought of her treachery.

She did not even try now to hide her guilt. But a look of appeal went out to him, begging him to spare her further shame. It was for pity that she asked, lest she should be humiliated before Madame Derouledé and Anne Mie.

"Give me the paper, Anne Mie," he said coldly. "I may perhaps recognise the handwriting of my most bitter enemy."

"It is unnecessary now," replied Anne Mie slowly, still gazing at Juliette's face, in which she read all that she wished to read.

The paper dropped out of her hand.

Derouledé stooped to pick it up. He unfolded it, smoothed it out and then saw that it was blank.

"There is nothing written on this paper," he said mechanically.

"No," answered Anne Mie; "no words, and yet the story of her treachery."

"What you have done is cruel and wicked, Anne Mie."

"Perhaps so; but I had guessed the truth, and I wished to know. God showed me this way, how to do it, and how to let you know as well."

"The less you speak of God just now the better, I think. Will you attend to my mother? She seems faint and ill."

Madame D  roul  de, silent in her arm-chair, had

watched the tragic scene before her almost without interest. All her thoughts had been paralysed since the moment when the appearance of Merlin and his men had warned her of the peril to her son. The final discovery of Juliette's treachery had in no way moved her. Since her son was in danger, she cared little whence the danger had come.

Obedient to Deroulede's wish, Anne Mie went to comfort the old lady.

The poor crippled girl was already feeling the terrible reaction of her deed. She knew nothing and cared nothing about the motives of Juliette; all she knew was that she was guilty of ingratitude and treachery. All the jealousy which had tortured Anne Mie for the past three weeks rose up and urged her to expose the traitor. And now it was done; it had all occurred as she had planned it. Paul knew that his love had been wasted upon a liar and a deceiver, and Juliette stood pale and ashamed before him.

Anne Mie had triumphed, but she was not happy in her triumph. Great sobs began to rise from her heart. She had succeeded in throwing down Paul's idol, but the one look she had cast at his face had shown her that she had also wrecked his life.

He seemed almost old now. The earnest, lively look had gone from his eyes; he was staring unseeingly before him, twisting between nerveless fingers that blank scrap of paper. All energy, all dignity of bearing seemed to have gone; on his face was a look of dull hopelessness.

"How he loved her!" sighed Anne Mie to herself, as she wrapped a shawl round Madame Deroulede's shoulders.

Juliette had said nothing. It seemed as if her very life had gone out of her. She was a mere

statue now, her mind numb, her heart dead. But she still looked at Deroulede. That one sense had remained: her sight. She looked, and saw the agony on his face: the recognition of her guilt, his bewilderment and the hopeless emptiness of his soul and mind.

Then gradually, as the minutes passed by, she saw the strong soul within him begin to fight against the darkness of his despair. He straightened himself. The remembrance of other matters, other interests than his own, began to lift the burden of his grief.

He remembered the letter-case containing the papers. What had happened to it? What had been her motive in delaying, through her concealment of it, the inevitable moment of its discovery by Merlin. The thought that she wished to save him never once entered his mind. There could be only one conclusion: that she had fooled him all along; fooled him when she sought his protection; fooled him when she taught him to love her; fooled him, above all, at that moment when he had declared his love and when she had listened to him, smiling.

When the bitter remembrance of the brief moment of happiness rushed back to his aching mind, then at last did he look up at her with a look of reproach, so great, so tender, that Anne Mie, who watched him, felt as if her own heart would break with the pity of it all.

But Juliette had caught the look too. This was more than she could bear. Very gradually her knees gave way beneath her, and at last she knelt down on the floor before him, her golden head bent under the burden of her guilt and shame.

CHAPTER XVI
UNDER ARREST

DEROULEDE did not attempt to go to her.

Only presently, when the heavy footsteps of Merlin and his men were heard once more, she rose quietly to her feet.

She had accomplished her act of humiliation and repentance there on her knees before them all. She looked for the last time upon those whom she had so deeply wronged, and in her heart said farewell to that great love which she had called forth and then had so hopelessly crushed.

Now she felt ready to pay in full the price of her sin.

Merlin had already entered the room. One look at his ill-tempered face had already told Juliette what she wished to know. He had searched her room and had found the fragments of burnt paper which she had purposely left in the ash-pan.

How he would act now was the one thing of importance left for Juliette to consider. That she would not escape arrest and punishment was at once made clear to her. The expression in Merlin's eyes, when he glanced at her, had told her that.

To Derouledé the return of Merlin and his men was welcome. After learning of Juliette's treachery he felt that nothing else mattered. He had given no further thought to his own danger. Vaguely he

guessed that Merlin would find the leather case. Where it was he could not tell; perhaps Juliette herself had handed it to the soldiers. She had only hidden it for a few moments, for some reason which he could not guess. That she was trying to save him, was ready even to sacrifice herself for him, never entered his mind.

Merlin's manner was now almost respectful.

"Citizen-Deputy," he began, "I have to bring you the welcome news that we have found nothing in your house that can in any way throw doubt upon your loyalty to the Republic. My orders, however, were to bring you before the Committee of Public Safety, whether I found proofs of your guilt or not. I have found none."

He was watching Déroulède keenly, hoping even at this last moment to detect a look or a sign which would furnish him with the proofs he was seeking. The slightest sign of relief or of satisfaction might have been sufficient to convince him and the Committee of Public Safety that the Citizen-Deputy was guilty after all.

But Derouledé never moved. He was sufficiently master of himself not to express either surprise or satisfaction. Yet he felt both—satisfaction not for his own safety, but because of his mother and Anne Mie, whom he would immediately send out of the country, out of all danger; and also because of her, of Juliette Marny, who, whatever she had done against him, was still his guest. His feeling of surprise was less keen. Merlin, it seemed, had not found the letter-case. Then Juliette had not herself given it to him. She must have succeeded in concealing it, and by concealing it had for the moment saved him. Why had she done so? The matter had ceased to interest him. It seemed to

him equally painful to owe his betrayal or his safety to her.

He kissed his mother tenderly, bidding her good-bye, and pressed Anne Mie's little hand warmly between his own. He did what he could to reassure them, but he dared say nothing before Merlin about the plans which he had already made for their safety.

After that he was ready to follow the soldiers.

As he passed close to Juliette he bowed and whispered:

"Adieu!"

She heard the whisper, but did not answer. The look in her eyes alone gave him the reply to his farewell.

His footsteps and those of the soldiers were heard echoing down the staircase, then the hall door to open and shut. Through the open window came the sound of cheering as the popular Citizen-Deputy appeared in the street.

Merlin, with two men beside him, remained at the door; he ordered the other two to go with Derouledé as far as the Hall of Justice, where the members of the Committee of Public Safety were sitting.

An angry crowd of women had gathered outside the house. The news had quickly spread along the street that Merlin, Merlin himself, had paid a visit to Paul Dérroulède's house, accompanied by four soldiers. Everybody knew what that meant. Such an insult to the man they most trusted had greatly angered the crowd. The women jeered at the soldiers as soon as they appeared. Merlin had a vague fear that the Citizen-Deputy might speak to the mob.

"A rope for you, old idiot!" shouted one of



"A ROPE FOR YOU, OLD IDIOT!"

the women, thrusting her fist under Merlin's nose.

"Give us the word, Citizen-Deputy," cried another, "and we'll break his ugly face."

One word from Deroulede now would have brought the crowd to his rescue. And indeed Merlin had expected something of the kind. The temper of the people of Paris was at fever-heat just now. The hatred of the populace for certain individuals was only equalled by their devotion to others. They had worshipped Marat because he was dirty like themselves; they had worshipped Danton for his energy and Robespierre for his calm; they worshipped Deroulede for his gentleness, his pity, his care of their children and the eloquence of his speech. It was that eloquence which Merlin feared now.

But Deroulede, when he might have turned the temper of the crowd to his own advantage, preferred to say nothing. He calmed them with a movement of his hand; and Merlin, who had all along meant to return to the house, took this opportunity to do so now. He allowed Déroulède and the two men to go on ahead and he himself retreated hastily through the door, followed by the jeers of the women.

When the door had closed in their faces, a few of them began hammering on it with their fists; then they realised that their favourite, Citizen-Deputy Deroulede, was marching alone between two soldiers, as if he were a prisoner. The word went round that he was under arrest, and was being taken to the Hall of Justice—a prisoner.

But this must not be. The mob of Paris had been taught that it was the master in the city, and it had learned its lesson well. It had chosen to

take Paul Deroulede under its special protection, and as a guard of honour to him—the women in ragged skirts, the men stripped to the waist, the children all yelling and shrieking—followed him to be sure that none should harm him.

CHAPTER XVII

ATONEMENT

MERLIN waited a while in the hall, until he heard the noise of the shrieking crowd gradually die away in the distance, then he once more mounted the stairs.

All these events outside had occurred during a very few minutes, and Madame Deroulede and Anne Mie had been too anxious as to what was happening in the street to take any notice of Juliette; but they had not dared to step out on to the balcony to see what was going on, and, therefore, did not understand what the reopening and shutting of the front door had meant. The next instant, however, Merlin's heavy footsteps on the stairs caused Anne Mie to look round in alarm.

"It is only the soldiers coming back for me," said Juliette quietly.

"For you?"

"Yes; they are coming to take me away. I suppose they did not wish to do it in the presence of M. Deroulede, for fear that——"

She had no time to say more. Anne Mie, unable to understand, was still looking at her in amazement when Merlin entered the room.

In his hand he held a leather case, all torn, and split at one end, and a few scraps of half-burnt paper. He walked straight up to Juliette, and roughly thrust the case and papers into her face.

"Are these yours?"

"Yes."

"I suppose you know where we found them?"

She nodded quietly in reply.

"What were these papers that you burnt?"

"Love-letters."

"You lie!"

She shrugged her shoulders.

"As you please," she said curtly.

"Once more I ask you. What were these papers?"

"I have told you," she said: "love-letters which I wished to burn."

"Who was your lover?" he asked.

Then as she did not reply he pointed towards the street, where cries of "Derouledé! Derouledé!" still echoed from afar.

"Were the letters from him?"

"No."

"Oh! You had more than one lover, then?"

He thrust his face quite close to hers and put his clawlike hand under her chin, forcing her to turn and look at him.

"You had more than one lover, then?" said Merlin, with a laugh which would have pleased the devil himself. "I see. You wished to send one of them to the guillotine in order to make way for the other? Was that it?"

"Was that it?" he repeated, suddenly seizing one of her wrists and giving it a savage twist, so that she almost screamed with pain.

"Yes," she replied firmly.

"Do you know that you brought me here on a fool's errand?" he asked; "that the Citizen-Deputy Derouledé cannot be sent to the guillotine on mere suspicion? Did you know that, when you

wrote out that denunciation? "

"No, I did not know."

"You thought we could arrest him on mere suspicion? "

"Yes."

"You knew he was innocent? "

"I knew it."

"Why did you burn your love-letters? "

"I was afraid that they might be found, and I did not wish that he should see them or know of them."

Merlin turned, with an oath, to the other two women, who sat pale and shrinking in a corner of the room, not understanding what was going on, not knowing what to think or what to believe. They had known nothing of Derouledé's plans for the escape of Marie Antoinette, they didn't know what the letter-case had contained, and yet they both vaguely felt that the beautiful girl who stood up so calmly before Merlin was not the faithless woman that she seemed.

"Did you know anything of this? " said Merlin roughly to the trembling Anne Mie.

"Nothing," she replied.

"No one knew anything of my private affairs or of my private letters," said Juliette coldly; "as I have told you, I planned to get rid of Citizen-Deputy Déroulède for the sake of my other lover. I had hoped that my plan would succeed. But I understand now that he is a person of too much importance to be brought to trial on mere suspicion, and my denunciation of him was not based on facts."

"And do you know, my fine aristocrat," said Merlin angrily, "that it is not wise to fool the Committee of Public Safety or to denounce without

cause one of the representatives of the people? ”

“ I know,” she replied quietly, “ that you, Citizen Merlin, are determined that someone shall pay for your failure. You dare not now attack the Citizen-Deputy, and so you must be content with me as your victim.”

“ Enough of this talk now. I have no time to waste words with aristos. Come now, follow my men quietly.”

“ I am quite ready to follow you. May I speak to my friends before I go? ”

“ No.”

“ I may never be able to speak to them again.”

“ I have said No, and I mean No. Now then, forward. March! I have wasted too much time already.”

Juliette had hoped that she might be able to soften Madame Deroulede's and Anne Mie's heart towards her. She did not know whether they believed the miserable lies which she had been telling Merlin; she only guessed that for the moment they still thought her the betrayer of Paul Deroulede. But she was not allowed to speak. She must go forth to her certain trial, to her probable death, without speaking the words which would allow them to understand her.

She turned quietly and walked towards the door, where the two soldiers already stood at attention.

Then it was that Anne Mie ran towards her. Something in Juliette's face had already caused her to repent bitterly of her action towards her, and now, as she was about to pass from under the shelter of this roof to the cruel publicity and terrible torture of that awful revolutionary court, Anne Mie's heart went out to her in boundless sympathy.

Before Merlin or the men could prevent her, she

had run up to Juliette, taken her hand and kissed it tenderly.

Juliette seemed to wake as if from a dream. She looked down at Anne Mie with a glance of hope, almost of joy, and whispered:

"It was an oath—I swore it to my father and my dead brother. Tell him."

Anne Mie could only nod her head; she could not speak, for her tears were choking her.

"But I'll pay the price—with my life. Tell him," whispered Juliette.

"Now then," shouted Merlin, "out of the way, hunchback, unless you want to come along too."

"Forgive me," said Anne Mie through her tears.

Then the men pushed her roughly aside. But at the door Juliette turned to her once more, and said:

"Petronelle—take care of her——"

And with a firm step she followed the soldiers out of the room.

Presently the front door was heard to open, then to shut with a loud bang, and the house was left in silence.

CHAPTER XVIII
IN THE LUXEMBOURG PRISON

JULIETTE, as she marched through the streets between two men of the National Guard with Merlin behind them, was followed by a cursing mob, mocked, insulted and pelted with mud. The supply of aristos for the guillotine had been running short of late, and this was a welcome sight: an aristocrat—a beautiful, refined woman, with white hands and proud, pale face. One woman tried to push past the soldiers and to strike her in the face—a woman! not thirty!—who was dragging by the hand a pale, miserable-looking little boy.

“Now, let us see you spit on the aristo!” the woman said to the child as the soldiers pushed her roughly aside. “Spit on the aristo, I tell you!” And the child pursed up its little mouth in obedience to its mother.

The soldiers laughed, and even Merlin forgot his bad temper, delighted at the incident.

But Juliette saw nothing and heard nothing of all this.

She was walking as in a dream. The mob did not exist for her. She did not see the evil, dirty faces pushed now and then quite close to her; she did not feel the rough hands of the soldiers hurrying her through the crowd. She was happy—supremely, completely happy. She thought of nothing except that she had saved him from the

consequences of her own sin, and that she was about to give her life for him, so that his safety might be more completely assured.

And so she allowed them to drag her through the jeering mob of Paris, who would have torn her to pieces then and there, had it not been for her guards, so as not to delay the pleasure of seeing her die.

They took her to the Luxembourg, once the palace of the Medici and the home of the great Louis the Fourteenth, now a foul, overfilled prison.

It was then six o'clock in the afternoon, towards the close of that memorable day. She was given into the charge of the governor of the prison, a short, thick-set man in black trousers and black woollen shirt, and wearing a dirty red cap with the tricolour rosette on his untidy head.

He eyed her up and down as she passed through the narrow doorway, then whispered one swift question to Merlin:

"Dangerous?"

"Yes," replied Merlin.

"You understand," added the governor; "we are so crowded. We ought to know if she must be put apart from the others and specially watched."

"Certainly," said Merlin, "you will be personally responsible for this prisoner to the Committee of Public Safety."

"Any visitors allowed?"

"Certainly not, without the special permission of the Public Prosecutor."

Juliette heard this brief exchange of words concerning her fate.

No visitor would be allowed to see her. If Deroulede tried to come, he would not see her.

Well, perhaps that would be best. She would have been afraid to meet him, afraid to read in his eyes the story of his dead love, which alone might have destroyed her present happiness.

And she wished to see no one. She had her memory—a short, happy memory. It consisted of a few words, a kiss—the last one—on her hand, and that passionate murmur which had escaped from his lips when he knelt at her feet:

“ Juliette ! ”

CHAPTER XIX

COMPLEXITIES

CITIZEN-DEPUTY Deroulede had been examined by the Committee of Public Safety, and for the moment allowed to go free.

The examination had been brief and quite private; the people of Paris were not to know as yet that their favourite was under a cloud. When he had answered all the questions put to him, and Merlin—just returned from his errand at the Luxembourg Prison—had given his account of his search in the Citizen-Deputy's house, Deroulede was briefly told that the Republic had no case against him.

But he knew quite well what that meant. He would be henceforth under suspicion, watched continually, as a mouse is watched by a cat, and seized again when the moment was considered ripe for his final downfall. His enemies would watch with keen, jealous eyes for the passing of his popularity; and Deroulede, with his sure knowledge of mankind, knew well enough that some day his popularity was sure to pass. When that day came his enemies, no longer afraid of his power to move the people of Paris, would not hesitate to act.

In the meanwhile his one thought and duty would be to get his mother and Anne Mie safely out of the country.

And also——

He thought of *her*, and wondered what had happened. As he walked swiftly across the bridge and reached the other side of the river, the events of the past few hours rushed upon his memory with terrible force.

A bitter ache filled his heart at the remembrance of her treachery. The baseness, the ingratitude of it was beyond his understanding. He tried to think if he had ever wronged her; he wondered if perhaps she loved someone else, and wished *him* out of her way. But how could that be? He had no claim on her love. He had not asked for her love. He had demanded nothing except the right to serve her and protect her. Why, then, had she treated him thus?

Out of revenge for her brother's death—that was the only explanation he could find, the only excuse for her crime.

He knew nothing of her oath to her father, and, of course, had never heard of the sad history of the young, sensitive girl placed in one terrible moment between her dead brother and her half-mad father. He thought of it only as common, unworthy revenge for something that he could not be considered responsible, for a sin that he had been indeed forced to commit.

And how he had loved her!

Yes, *loved*—for that was in the past now. She had ceased to be his idol now, she had fallen so low that he could not find the way to descend and search for her again.

At his own door he was met by Anne Mie in tears.

"She has gone," murmured the young girl.

"Gone? Who? Where?" asked Derouledé, an icy feeling of fear at his heart.

"Juliette has gone," replied Anne Mie; "those brutes took her away."

"When?"

"Immediately after you left. That man Merlin found some ashes and scraps of paper——"

"Ashes?"

"Yes, and a torn letter-case."

"Great God!"

"She said that they were love-letters which she had been burning for fear you should see them."

"She said so? Anne Mie, Anne Mie, are you quite sure?"

It was all so horrible, and he did not understand it all; his brain, usually so keen and active, refused him service at this terrible moment.

"Yes; I am quite sure," continued Anne Mie, in the midst of her tears. "And oh! that awful Merlin said some foul things. But she repeated her story, and said that she had—another lover. Oh, Paul, I am sure it is not true. I hated her, I was jealous of her because—because—I knew you loved her so, and I mistrusted her, but I cannot believe she was quite as base as that."

"No, no, child," he said in a toneless voice; "she was not so base as that. Tell me more of what she said."

"She said very little else. But Merlin asked her whether she had denounced you so as to get you out of the way for the sake of another lover."

"And what did she say to this?"

"She said that it was true. And then she followed them without a murmur, as Merlin said that she would have to answer before the Committee of Public Safety for having fooled the representatives of the people."

"Poor girl! She'll answer for it with her life,"

murmured Deroulede. "And with mine!" he added, half to himself.

Anne Mie did not hear him; her soul was filled with a great, an overwhelming pity for them both.

"Before they took her away," she said, placing her thin, delicate-looking hands on his arm, "I ran to her and bade her farewell. The soldiers pushed me aside but I was able to kiss her—and then she whispered a few words to me."

"Yes? What were they?"

"'It was an oath,' she said. 'I swore it to my father and to my dead brother. Tell him,'" repeated Anne Mie slowly.

An oath!

Now he understood, and oh! how he pitied her. How terribly she must have suffered in her soul when her noble, upright nature fought against this black treachery. That she was true and brave in herself, of that Déroulède had now no doubt. She had decided to pay with her life for her treason against him and his family. She would be judged before a tribunal which would inevitably condemn her. She would give her life to pay for a wrong that could never be undone.

And she had never loved him!

That was the only bitterness which he knew now. It hurt more than her sin, more than her falsehood, more even than his loss of her.

Never until now did Déroulède realise how great had been his hopes; how he had watched day after day for a look in her eyes, a word from her lips, to show him that she might care for him. And now and then, when her beautiful face had lighted up at the sight of him, when she had smiled a greeting to him on his return from his work—then he had begun to hope, to dream.

But all that was merely a trick to hide the conflict that was raging within her soul, nothing more.

She did not love him, of that he felt sure. Being a man, he did not understand her woman's heart. It did not occur to him that in her mistaken sense of duty she might betray him and yet even love him. He was a man and thought as a man thinks. Would a man betray his friend? No—never. He might betray his enemy, the creature he hated, whose downfall would cause him joy. But his friend? And Juliette had betrayed him. Therefore she did not love him.

As to Juliette's generosity in trying to save him when she was at last brought face to face with the consequences of the wrong she had committed, *that* he put down to the noble feelings of which he knew she was capable. But that was not love. And perhaps she had done that more for the sake of his mother and of Anne Mie than for himself.

Therefore what mattered life to him now? She was lost to him for ever, whether he succeeded in snatching her from the guillotine or not. He had little hope of saving her, but at least he would not owe his life to her.

Anne Mie, seeing him sunk deeply in his own thoughts, had quietly left him. Her own good sense told her already that Paul Derouledé's first step would be to try to get his mother out of danger, and out of the country, while there was yet time. So, without waiting for instructions, she began the same evening to pack up her belongings and those of Madame Déroulède.

There was no longer any hatred in her heart against Juliette. She had already guessed what Paul Derouledé had failed to understand—that Juliette loved him with a love as deep as his own.

She firmly believed that nothing now could save Juliette from death, and a great feeling of tenderness had crept into her heart for the woman whom she had looked upon as her enemy.

She too had learnt in those brief days the lesson that vengeance belongs to God alone.

CHAPTER XX

THE INN OF THE ONE-EYED HORSE

It was close upon midnight.

The place had become suffocatingly hot; the smell of tobacco and cheap spirits hung like vapour in mid-air. It was the principal room in the Inn of the One-Eyed Horse, which had been used for the past five years as the chief meeting-place of the most blood-thirsty party of the Republic.

The One-Eyed Horse lay up one of those mean streets which, by their narrow ways and overhanging houses, shut out sun, air and light from their miserable inhabitants. It was one of the most wretched-looking dwellings in this street of evil repute. The plaster was cracked, the walls themselves seemed to bulge outwards as if ready at any moment to fall down. The ceilings were low, and supported by beams black with age and dirt.

At one time it had been famous for its vast cellars where rare old wines had been stored, and in the days of King Louis the Fourteenth the gay sons of the richest families in Paris were accustomed to go to the One-Eyed Horse for a night's drinking.

Now it was no longer so. The Revolution had changed all that

Rats and vermin of all sorts worked their way now in the underground parts of the building.

They ate up each other down there in the cellars, whilst men did the same sort of thing in the rooms above.

It was a club of Equality and Fraternity. Any passer-by was at liberty to enter and take part in the conversation, the only qualification for membership being a love for Madame Guillotine.

It was from the One-Eyed Horse that most of the denunciations went forth on their way to that wooden box, with a slit at the top, above which was fixed the notice bearing the word: "The Law of Suspected Traitors."

They sat in council here, some thirty or forty at first, the patriots of the Republic. They talked of Liberty mostly, with many oaths and curses against the tyrants; and then started a tyranny of their own more merciless than the tyranny of the Kings of France.

And this Inn of the One-Eyed Horse was their temple of Liberty, this dark, evil-smelling place, with its narrow, cracked window-panes and its floor of rough boards, worm-eaten, bare, save for a thick carpet of dust which deadened the sound of booted feet. There were only a couple of chairs in the room, both of which had to be put up against the wall lest they should break and bring the sitter down upon the floor; otherwise a number of empty wine barrels did duty for seats. There had once been paper on the walls, but now it hung down in strips, showing the cracked plaster beneath. On the walls here and there someone had written in big black letters the war-cry of the Revolution: "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity or Death."

To-night the assembly consisted of less than twenty, for the number of active members had been gradually reduced. Everyone suspected everyone

else. No one felt safe. So, like the rats in the cellars below, they had swallowed one another up, the denouncers being in their turn denounced and sent to the guillotine by others more powerful or more cunning than themselves.

After the death of Marat, Merlin became the chief member of the club—he and Fouquier-Tinville, his bosom friend, the Public Prosecutor. Yet bosom friends though they were, they worked against one another secretly, whispering one against the other: “He is a traitor!” It was a race between them towards the inevitable goal—the guillotine.

For the moment it seemed likely that Merlin would be the first to arrive there. He had been given a task which he had failed to accomplish. For weeks the discussions at the One-Eyed Horse had been chiefly concerned with the downfall of Citizen-Deputy Deroulede. And now the chance had come. A denunciation by some unnamed writer had roused the hopes of these blood-thirsty patriots. It all seemed perfectly clear. To try to save that traitor, the Queen, was just the kind of scheme to be planned in the brain of Paul Déroulède.

So Merlin had been sent to search the Deputy’s house for proofs of guilt.

And Merlin had come back empty-handed.

The arrest of the female aristo who, it seemed, had denounced Deroulede, was no excuse for Merlin’s failure to make the more important capture.

As soon as Merlin joined his friends in the low, ill-lit, evil-smelling room he realised at once that feeling was against him. His “Good evening” had been greeted either with malevolent smiles or

with black looks. Tinville himself had bowed to him sarcastically.

One of the patriots, a huge fellow, almost a giant, with heavy fists and broad shoulders, had, after a few mocking words, dragged one of the empty wine barrels to Merlin's table, and sat down opposite him.

"Take care, Citizen Lenoir," said Tinville, with an evil laugh, "Citizen Merlin will perhaps arrest you instead of Deroulede, whom he has allowed to slip through his fingers."

"No, I've no fear," replied Lenoir, with an oath. "Citizen Merlin is too much of an aristo to hurt anyone; his hands are too clean; he does not care to do the dirty work of the Republic. Isn't that so, Monsieur Merlin?" added the giant with a mock bow, and emphasising the *Monsieur* which was no longer used in these days of equality.

"My patriotism is too well known," said Merlin roughly, "to fear any attacks from jealous enemies; and as for my search in the Citizen-Deputy's house this afternoon, I was told to find proofs against him and I found none."

Lenoir spat on the floor, crossed his dark hairy arms over the table, and said quietly:

"Real patriotism, as we understand it, makes the proofs it wants and leaves nothing to chance."

A murmur of approval greeted these words.

"You were a fool, Citizen Merlin," continued Lenoir slowly, "not to see that the woman was playing her own game."

Merlin had turned pale under the dirt on his face. With this huge fellow accusing him of negligence, he almost felt as if he were already before the merciless tribunal to which he had dragged so many victims. Now it might be his own turn. These

blood-thirsty jackals had been cheated of their prey ; they would willingly tear him to pieces to make up for their loss.

“ But what could I have done ? ” he murmured.

“ Listen to him ! ” rejoined Lenoir with a sneer.

“ What could he have done ? Patriots, friends, brothers, I ask you, what could he have done ? ”

Lenoir had pushed the wine barrel aside, it rolled away from under him, and in the fullness of his contempt for Merlin stood up and spat once more upon the floor.

“ I ask you,” he repeated, with a loud oath, “ what any patriot would do, what you or I would have done, in the house of a man whom we *know* is a traitor to the Republic ? Brothers, friends, Citizen Merlin found a heap of burnt papers, he found a letter-case which had obviously contained important papers, and he asks us what he could do ! ”

“ But Deroulede is too important a man to be tried without proofs. The whole mob of Paris would have turned on us, if we dared to condemn him without proofs.”

“ Without proofs ? Who said there were no proofs ? ” asked Lenoir.

“ I found the burnt papers and the torn letter-case in the woman’s room. She confessed that they were love-letters, and that she had denounced Deroulede in order to get rid of him.”

“ Then let me tell you, Citizen Merlin, that a true patriot would have taken care to find those papers in Deroulede’s room, not the woman’s room, and let me add that a faithful servant of the Republic would not have found all those papers destroyed—he would have taken care to ‘ find ’ one letter addressed to the prisoner in the Conciergerie Prison,

which would have proved that Citizen-Deputy Deroulede was a traitor. That is what a true patriot would have done—what I would have done. Citizen Merlin, are you such a fool that you did not dare to *forg*e a letter which would bring this traitor to his doom? Let me tell you, friends, that the Republic has no use for a man who allows one of her enemies to escape through his stupidity, his cowardice, his fear of the anger of the Paris mob.”

Thunderous applause greeted this speech, which was accompanied by violent gestures quite beyond the power of the writer to describe. Lenoir had a harsh voice, and he spoke with a provincial accent quite unlike that of the low-class Parisian. His enthusiasm seemed to increase his size and fill him with a strange power. He looked, in his ragged, dust-stained clothes, as if he combined in his own person all the worst qualities of the mob which had driven everything decent, kindly and noble to the guillotine in order to make way for brutality and hate.

CHAPTER XXI

CITIZEN LENOIR

TINVILLE had remained silent during Lenoir's speech. He sat picking his teeth and staring at the speaker, not very pleased at the attention which Lenoir was drawing to himself. For Tinville did not care to take second place to any man at these gatherings at the One-Eyed Horse.

"It is easy to talk now, Citizen—er—Lenoir. Is that your name? Well, you are rather a stranger here, Citizen Lenoir, and you have not yet shown to the Republic that you can do anything else but talk."

"If somebody did not talk, Citizen Tinville—is that your name?" replied Lenoir, with a sneer—"if somebody didn't talk, nothing would get done. You all sit here and blame Citizen Merlin for being a fool, and I must say that I agree with you there, but—but——"

"Well, what is your 'but,' citizen?" said Tinville, for Lenoir had paused, as if trying to collect his thoughts. He had dragged a wine barrel close to the table, and he now sat upon it, facing Tinville and the others. The light of the candle behind him threw into bold outline his head crowned with the revolutionary cap, and his great, broad shoulders. He had long hands which were black with coal dust, and with these he continually made fierce gestures, as if he was



"LIBERTY, EQUALITY, FRATERNITY OR DEATH!"

5*

I WILL REPAY

in the act of gripping some enemy by the throat.

"Well," he said at last, addressing the company in general, "we all know that this Deroulede is a traitor, eh?"

"We do," came the answer from all present.

"Then, if he is a traitor, there is only one thing for him—death. And all we need do is to decide how best to carry out our purpose."

Merlin, very glad to see the attention of the gathering thus turned away from his failure, had gradually become more cheerful. He too dragged one of the wine barrels, which did duty for chairs, close to the table.

"I suppose," said Tinville, "I suppose, Citizen Lenoir, that you are able to give us proofs of the Citizen-Deputy's guilt?"

"If I give you the proofs, Citizen Tinville," answered the other, "will you, as Public Prosecutor, do your duty?"

"It is my duty to accuse publicly those who are traitors to the Republic."

"And you, Citizen Merlin," said Lenoir, "will you help the Republic to the best of your ability to be rid of this traitor?"

"My services to the cause of our Great Revolution are too well known to leave any doubt——" began Merlin.

But Lenoir interrupted him impatiently.

"We don't want any of your fine speeches just now, Citizen Merlin. We all know that you have failed miserably in this business, and the Republic cares little for those of her sons who have failed; but whilst you are still Minister of Justice the people of France have need of you."

"What is your advice then, Citizen Lenoir?"

Apparently all the company was willing to accept Lenoir's leadership in this matter. Merlin, still in terror for himself, looked to him for advice, even Tinville was ready to listen. All were united in their desire to get rid of Déroulède and all felt that in Lenoir there was some secret dislike of the Citizen-Deputy which gave him a clear insight of how best to bring about his downfall.

"What is your advice?" had been Merlin's question, and everyone there listened eagerly for what was to come.

"Well, we are all agreed," began Lenoir quietly, "that just at this moment it would be unwise to accuse this Deroulede without proofs. Now, Citizen Merlin failed to get us these proofs, and for the moment Déroulède is a free man. And being a wise one, too, I imagine that within two days he will have left this country. That means that we haven't much time. I propose, therefore, that it shall be Citizen-Deputy Déroulède himself who shall provide the people of France with proofs of his own treason against the Republic."

"But how? But how?" Rapid, loud and excited questions greeted this extraordinary suggestion.

"By very simple means," replied Lenoir calmly. "Isn't there a proverb which our grandfathers used to repeat, that if you only give a man a sufficiently long rope he is sure to hang himself? My idea is that we should give our friend Deroulede plenty of rope."

"Yes, yes! Go on!" said Merlin excitedly.

"Now, this woman who denounced Deroulede—she is the key to everything. She denounced him. Then she wished to be rid of him. Why?

Because he was her lover and got tired of her? No, no she had another lover—she has confessed that. She wished to be rid of Deroulede to make way for the other man. And why? Not because Déroulède was tired of her, but because he loved her and she was tired of him.”

“Well, and how does that help us?” asked Tinville.

“It proves that Deroulede, being in love with the girl, would do his best to save her from the guillotine.”

“Of course.”

“Well, let him try, say I,” said Lenoir. “Give him the rope with which to hang himself.”

“What does he mean?” asked one or two of the men, whose dull brains had not yet grasped the full meaning of the scheme.

“You don’t understand what I mean, citizens; you think I am mad or drunk, do you? Very well, give me your attention five minutes more, and you shall see. Let us suppose that we have reached the moment when this woman—what is her name? Oh! ah! yes! Juliette Marny—stands in the Hall of Justice on her trial before the Committee of Public Safety. Citizen Foucquier-Tinville, one of our greatest patriots, reads out the accusation against her: the papers burnt, and the torn, mysterious letter-case found in her room. If these are considered, in the accusation, to be treasonable correspondence with the enemies of the Republic, her condemnation follows at once, and then the guillotine. There is no defence for her, for the Minister of Justice according to his own Law allows no advocate for those accused of treason. But,” continued the giant slowly, “in

the case of other offences the Minister of Justice allows the accused to be publicly defended. Then everything depends on you, Citizen Tinville. If you accuse Juliette Marny of treason, she will be condemned in a few minutes, dragged back to her prison and executed before Derouledé has had time to make any plans for her defence or safety. But see the difference if you accuse her of an ordinary offence. The woman Juliette Marny may be accused of falsely denouncing Derouledé to get rid of him for the sake of another lover. In that case the Minister of Justice allows an advocate to defend her. She will have no advocate in court; but don't you think that Déroulède will step forward and defend her himself? Can't you imagine the speech he will make on her behalf? I can. And that is the rope, I tell you, citizens, with which he'll hang himself. Will he admit that the burnt correspondence was another lover's letters? No!—a thousand times no! And then it will be for our clever Public Prosecutor to get a confession from him that this correspondence was his own. And if it was his, then why did she burn it? Because it proved that he is a traitor, and she burnt the letters to save him? "

He paused, exhausted at last, mopping his forehead, and sat down. Loud cries of approval greeted the end of the long speech. Even Tinville had nothing to say against it. Already he was smiling to himself at the thoughts of victory. For the past few months the trials before the Committee of Public Safety had been dull and uninteresting. But this trial on the morrow would be different—the excitement of it all, the trap laid for Derouledé, the pleasure of seeing him

take the first steps towards his own downfall.

Everyone there was eager and enthusiastic. Lenoir, having spoken at such length, had now become silent, but everyone else talked and drank brandy. For several hours, far into the night, the sitting was continued. Everyone had something to say about Lenoir's scheme, some new suggestion to offer.

It was Lenoir himself who was the first to break up the gathering. He bade his companions a quiet good night, then passed out into the dark street. After he had gone there were a few seconds of silence in the room. The giant's heavy footsteps echoed along the street, and gradually died away in the distance.

Then at last Fouquier-Tinville, the Public Prosecutor, spoke:

"And who is that man?" he asked, addressing the assembly of patriots.

Most of them did not know.

"He comes from somewhere up north," said one of the men at last; "he has been here several times before now. I believe he is a butcher by trade, and I fancy he comes from Calais. He was first brought here by Citizen Brogard, who is a good patriot enough."

One by one they said good night to each other and went out. Tinville remained one of the last; he and Merlin and two or three others.

"What do you think, citizens?" said Tinville to these, quietly. "That man Lenoir is very eloquent, eh?"

"Eloquent—and dangerous," said Merlin, and the others nodded their approval.

"But his scheme is good," suggested one of the men.

“Yes, and we’ll make use of it,” answered Tinville, “but afterwards——”

He paused, and drew his finger across his throat, smiling evilly.

“Yes, he is dangerous. We’ll leave him in peace to-morrow, but afterwards——”

Then, nodding to one another, the last of the patriots, satisfied with the night’s work, passed out into the night.

The watchman was making his rounds, carrying his lantern, and shouting his customary cry:

“Inhabitants of Paris, sleep quietly. Everything is in order, everything is at peace.”

CHAPTER XXII

THE CLOSE OF DAY

DEROULEDE had spent the whole of this same night in a search for Juliette.

Earlier in the day, soon after Anne Mie had given him her news, he had sought out his English friend, Sir Percy Blakeney, and talked over with him the final arrangements for the journey of Madame Déroulède and Anne Mie from Paris. In this important matter he knew that time must not be lost.

Paul Deroulede had never for a moment had any mistaken ideas concerning his own popularity. He knew that at any time, and for any trivial cause, the love which the mob had for him would readily turn to hate. Others before him—Mirabeau, La Fayette, Desmoulins—had been popular, but the love of the crowd is a most changeable thing; the crowd which had once loved them had at last turned against them. Was it likely that he alone should escape? Therefore, while he was in power, while he was loved and trusted, he had made full preparations for his own downfall and for the flight from Paris of those who were dependent upon him. He had, as far back as a year ago, provided himself with the necessary passports and arranged with his English friend certain plans for the safety of his mother and his little relative, Anne Mie. Now it was merely

a question of putting these plans into action without delay.

Within two hours of Juliette Marny's arrest, Madame Deroulede and Anne Mie had left the house in the Street of the Medical School. They carried very little luggage with them, and it was said that they were going into the country to visit a sick cousin.

The mother of the popular Citizen-Deputy was free to travel where she liked. The necessary passports which the safety of the Republic demanded were all in perfect order, and Madame Deroulede and Anne Mie passed through the north gate of Paris an hour before sunset on that 24th day of Fructidor. Their large travelling coach took them some distance along the North Road, where they were to meet Lord Hastings and Lord Anthony Dewhurst, two of the Scarlet Pimpernel's most trusted helpers, who were to accompany them as far as the coast and see them safely on board the English yacht.

In this matter, therefore, Deroulede had no anxiety. His chief duty was to his mother and to Anne Mie, and that duty had now been fully carried out.

Then there was old Pétronelle.

Ever since the arrest of her young mistress she had been in a state of mind near to madness, and no words of Deroulede could persuade her to leave Paris without Juliette.

"If my little lamb is to die," she said, sobbing, "then I have no cause to live. Let those devils take me to the guillotine, too. But if my darling is allowed to go free, then what will become of her in this awful city without me? She and I have never been separated. Who would cook for her

and wash her clothes, I'd like to know? "

Deroulede had not the heart to tell her that the claws of the Committee of Public Safety seldom let go, when once they had closed upon a victim. All he could do was to take Petronelle back to her old apartment, which Juliette had left in order to come to him. The old woman persuaded herself that she was waiting there for the return of her young mistress, and became quite cheerful at the sight of the familiar room.

Deroulede had provided her with money and necessaries. He had but few remaining hopes in his heart, but he felt that Petronelle was too unimportant to draw upon herself the terrible attention of the Committee of Public Safety.

By nightfall he had settled the old woman safely in her apartment. Then only did he feel free to devote himself to what seemed now the one, the only aim of his life—to find Juliette.

A dozen prisons in Paris! More than five thousand prisoners on that night, awaiting trial!

Yet Deroulede, strong in his own power, did not at first realise how difficult his task would be.

At the Hall of Justice they could tell him nothing. The lists of newly arrested persons had not yet been brought there by the Commandant of Paris, Citizen Santerre. The lists, moreover, would not be completed until the next day when the trials of the new prisoners would be almost ready to begin.

Then began Deroulede's weary search through those twelve prisons of Paris.

From the Temple Prison to the Conciergerie, from the Conde to the Luxembourg; and everywhere the same shrug of the shoulders, the same reply to his eager question:

“Juliette Marny? Not known here.”

Unknown! Her name had not yet been taken and put on the prison lists, she was still merely one of that immense flock of cattle, sent in ever-increasing numbers to the slaughter-house.

Vainly did Deroulede try to persuade, to entreat, to bribe. The guardians of these twelve prisons knew nothing of individual prisoners.

But as a Citizen-Deputy he was allowed to look for himself. He did not find her. No one told him that by Merlin's strictest orders she had placed with those prisoners labelled as “dangerous” who were allowed to see no one or to communicate with no one.

Then when the night watchman had begun his rounds, when all public places were closed, Deroulede knew that his search for that night must remain fruitless.

But he could not rest. In and out the streets of Paris he roamed during the greater part of the night. He was now only awaiting the dawn to demand publicly the right to stand beside Juliette. A hopeless misery was in his heart, almost a longing for life to end; only one thing kept his brain active, his mind clear: the hope of saving Juliette.

The dawn was breaking in the far east when, wandering along the banks of the river, he suddenly felt a touch on his arm.

“Come to my lodging,” said a pleasant, lazy voice close to his ear. “A beastly, dirty place it is, indeed, but at least we can talk quietly there.”

Deroulede looked up to see his friend, Sir Percy Blakeney, standing beside him. Tall, well-dressed, gay, he seemed by his very presence to drive away

the heavy thoughts that were weighing down Deroulede's active mind. He followed him readily enough through the narrow, winding streets of the old part of the city until Sir Percy stopped outside a small inn, the door of which stood wide open.

"My host has nothing to fear from thieves," explained the Englishman as he guided his friend through the narrow doorway and up the creaking stairs to a small room on the floor above. "He leaves all the doors open for anyone to walk in, but the inside of the house is, as you see, so uninviting that no one is tempted to enter."

"I wonder you care to stay here," remarked D roul de, with a momentary smile, as he contrasted the well-dressed appearance of his friend with the gloom and dirt of these surroundings.

"I am only staying in this wretched hole until the moment when I can drag you out of this murderous city."

Deroulede shook his head.

"You'd better go back to England, then," he said, "for I'll never leave Paris now."

"Not without Juliette Marny, shall we say?" replied Sir Percy quietly.

"And I fear that she has placed herself beyond our reach," said Deroulede.

"You know that she is in the Luxembourg Prison?" asked the Englishman suddenly.

"I guessed it, but could find no proof."

"And that she will be tried to-morrow?"

"They never keep a prisoner waiting too long," replied Deroulede bitterly. "I guessed that too."

"What do you mean to do?"

"Defend her with the last breath in my body."

"You love her still, then?" asked Blakeney, with a smile.

"Still!" The look, the accent, the bitterness of a hopeless love conveyed in that one word, told Blakeney all that he wished to know.

"Yet she betrayed you?"

"Yes. And to pay the price of that sin—an oath, mind you, sworn to her father—she is ready to give her life for me."

"And you are prepared to forgive her?"

"To understand is to forgive, and I love her."

"And she?"

"She does not love me—would she have betrayed me else?"

He sat beside the table, and buried his head in his hands. Not even his dearest friend must see how much he had suffered, how deeply his love had been wounded.

Sir Percy said nothing, but a curious, pleasant smile played round the corners of his mouth. He made a movement as if he would say something, then seemed to change his mind, and shrugged his shoulders.

When Déroulède looked up again, Sir Percy was sitting calmly in his chair, with a quite blank expression on his face.

"Now that you know how much I love her, my friend," said Déroulède as soon as he had mastered his emotion, "will you look after her when they have condemned me, and save her for my sake?"

"Save her? Do you then suppose that the Scarlet Pimpernel can perform the impossible?"

Once more it seemed as if Sir Percy were about to tell something of great importance to his friend, then once more he checked himself. The Scarlet Pimpernel was, above all, far-seeing and practical.

The glowing eyes of Deroulede, the nervous movements of his hands, did not suggest that he was in a fit state to be entrusted with plans the success of which hung on a thread.

Therefore Blakeney only smiled, and added quietly:

“Well, I’ll do my best.”

CHAPTER XXIII

JUSTICE

THE day had been an unusually busy one.

Five and thirty prisoners had been tried in the last eight hours—an average of rather more than four to the hour; twelve minutes and a half each in which to prove guilt or innocence. And never had Citizen Fouquier-Tinville done his work with greater speed or energy.

Each of these five and thirty prisoners had been accused of treason against the Republic, and all had to have certain, undeniable proofs of their guilt brought before the Committee of Public Safety. Sometimes a few letters, written to friends abroad, and seized at the frontier; an expression of horror at the executions in Revolution Square or an expression of sympathy for some person who had incurred the displeasure of the Republic—these were undeniable proofs; or perhaps a couple of pistols, or an old family sword seized in the house of a peaceful citizen, would be brought against a prisoner, as a sure proof of his enmity towards the People of France.

Oh! it was not difficult!

Out of the thirty-five who were accused, thirty were condemned. It had indeed been a glorious day.

But the day's work was not yet done.

The prisoners accused of treason had been dis-

posed of, but there still remained the ordinary criminals, the thieves, pickpockets and cut-throats. These too had to be dealt with by the law. As compared with the five and thirty who had just learnt their fate they had great advantages. Treason against the Republic was indefensible, but other crimes were dealt with according to all the forms of justice. There were citizen judges and citizen advocates, and the citizen criminals were given every chance.

The afternoon of this hot August day, one of the last of glorious Fructidor, had passed away, and the shades of evening began to creep slowly into the long, bare room.

The Citizen-President of the Court sat at the far end of the room on a rough wooden bench, with a desk in front of him covered with papers. Just above him, on the bare, whitewashed wall, the words: "The Republic: One and Indivisible," and below them: "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity!" To the right and left of the Citizen-President four clerks were busy writing. At present no one is speaking, and the scratching of the clerks' pens against the paper is the only sound which disturbs the silence of the hall.

In front of the President, on a bench lower than his, sits Citizen Fouquier-Tinville, rested and refreshed, ready to take up his work again for as many hours as his country demands of him.

On every desk a candle, smoking and flickering, throws strange lights and shadows on the faces of the clerks and of the President. In the centre of the room a platform surrounded by an iron railing is ready for the accused. On each side of the long, whitewashed walls there are three rows of benches. The front row of these benches is re-

served for those citizen-deputies who desire to be present in the Court. It is their privilege, almost their duty, as representatives of the people, to see that the trials are properly conducted.

These benches are already well filled. At one end, on the left, Citizen Merlin, Minister of Justice, sits; next to him Citizen-Minister Lebrun; also Citizen Robespierre with his pale, watery eyes and curious, disdainful smile. Other well-known faces are there also. But everyone notes Citizen-Deputy Déroulède, the idol of the people, as he sits at the extreme end of a bench on the right, with arms folded tightly across his chest.

At last the Citizen-President rings a hand-bell, and there is a noise of laughter and loud curses, pushing and struggling, as the general public is admitted into the hall. Women with ragged skirts; with bare legs, and feet thrust into heavy wooden shoes; wild eyes and disordered hair. Women without emotion save that of hate; with the memory of years of hunger and thirst and wrongs and with no desire save that of revenge on those less wretched than themselves. They crowd in, pushing one another in their eagerness to get into the front rows of the benches, where they can get a better view of the miserable victims about to be brought before them. And men whose natural feelings of pity and love have been changed by the bitterness of the times into hatred and love of blood. And children too—children with pale faces, staring around them with eager eyes awaiting the amusement of the spectacle; gazing at the President with his tall red cap; at the clerks with their pens writing, writing, writing; at the candles throwing clouds of black smoke up to the dark ceiling above.

Then suddenly the eyes of one of them alight on Paul Deroulede's face on the opposite side of the room.

"Look! Look! Papa Deroulede!" she says, pointing her little finger across at him, and turning eagerly to those around her. She remembers, perhaps, a happy afternoon spent in Papa Deroulede's house, with fine white bread to eat in plenty, and great jars of thick, creamy milk.

He rouses himself as he hears his name called, and his eyes lose their look of misery as he responds to the greeting of the little one. And for a moment there is a murmur among the women, and the hard, starved expressions soften at the sight of him.

Fouquier-Tinville, who has been watching keenly, smiles to himself. The Citizen-President impatiently rings his hand-bell, and in a loud voice gives the order:

"Bring forth the accused!"

CHAPTER XXIV

THE TRIAL OF JULIETTE

ONE by one the accused had been brought forth, guarded by two men of the National Guard in ragged, stained uniforms of red, white and blue; they were then conducted to the small raised platform in the centre of the hall, and made to listen to the accusations brought against them by Citizen Fouquier-Tinville, the Public Prosecutor.

They were small charges mostly: fraud, theft and so on, occasionally a case of manslaughter. One man, however, was accused of murder with highway robbery. He was condemned to the guillotine, the others to the prison-ships at Brest or Toulon. Three women were sent to the women's prison at the Salpetriere, and were dragged out loudly protesting their innocence, and followed by laughter from the spectators on the benches.

Then there was a momentary silence in the court.

Juliette Marny had been brought in.

She was quite calm, and very beautiful, dressed in a plain grey dress, with a black band round her waist and a white kerchief across her bosom. Her young, oval face was very pale. She seemed quite unconscious of her surroundings, and did not see Déroulède as she walked with a firm step up to the platform, looking neither to the right nor to the left of her.

A feeling that was almost physical pain, so bitter it was, overcame Deroulede, when at last he heard her name loudly called by the Public Prosecutor.

All day he had waited for this awful moment, forgetting his own misery in the horrible thought of what *she* would endure, when she knew that she was to be tried not as an enemy of the Republic but as a common criminal.

Yet for her chances of safety and of ultimate freedom; it was undoubtedly best that it should be so. Accused of treason against the Republic she would have been liable to secret trial; she might have been brought up, condemned and executed before he could even hear of her whereabouts, before he could throw himself before her judges and take her guilt upon himself. It all might have been finished before Déroulède knew anything of it.

Undoubtedly it was better so. The strength of his appeal would turn all feeling from her to him; and after these few moments of misery she would be free to leave Paris, to be happy, and to forget him and the memory of him.

The charge against Juliette Marny has become history now. It is all placed on record in the *Bulletin of the Revolutionary Tribunal*. Any one who cares may read it, for the Bulletin is preserved for all time in the National Library of Paris.

“Juliette Marny, you are accused of having, by a most false and wicked denunciation, defamed a representative of the people; you caused the Revolutionary Tribunal, through this same mischievous act, to bring an accusation against this representative of the people, to make a search in



" I HAVE NOTHING TO SAY "

I WILL REPAY

his house and to waste valuable time which belonged to the service of the Republic. And this you did, not from a misguided sense of duty towards your country, but in an evil and impure spirit, to be rid of one who thought of nothing but your welfare. This you did for the sake of a secret lover, and it is this which has now brought you before this court of justice to answer to a charge of defamation of character and corruption of public morals. And in proof of this I now place before the court your own confession that your accusation against Citizen-Deputy Déroulède was false and mischievous and further the torn letter-case containing the letters from some person unknown, which you vainly tried to destroy. In the name of the people of France, whose spokesman I am, I demand that you be taken from this Hall of Justice to Revolution Square, in full view of the citizens of Paris, and clothed in a soiled white garment, the sign of the impurity of your soul, that there you be publicly whipped by the hands of Citizen Samson, the public executioner; after which, that you be taken to the prison of the Salpêtrière, there to be detained at the will of the Committee of Public Safety. And now, Juliette Marny, you have heard the accusation brought against you; have you anything to say, why the sentence which I have demanded shall not be passed upon you?"

Shouts, laughter and curses greeted the speech of the Public Prosecutor.

As for Derouledé, he thought that his reason was leaving him. He dug his finger-nails into his flesh, trying by physical pain to drown the sufferings of his mind. The hooting and yelling of the filthy mob sounded to him like the cries of lost

souls, shrieking from hell. All his former pity for them was gone, his love for humanity, his devotion to the suffering poor. A great hatred for this Revolution and its people filled his whole soul, together with a mad desire to see them all suffer, starve and die a miserable death. His passion of hate was now at least as ugly as theirs. For one brief moment he was brought down to their level in his desire for revenge.

Only Juliette throughout all this remained calm and silent. She had heard the accusation and the nature of her punishment. Her cheeks had become pale, but never for a moment did she lose her dignity. She never once turned her head towards the mob who insulted her. She stood silent until the shouting had stopped, motionless except for her finger-tips which beat impatiently upon the railing in front of her.

"Juliette Marny, have you anything to say in reply to the charge brought against you, and why the sentence which I have demanded should not be passed against you?"

The heat in the court had become oppressive. Juliette took out her handkerchief and wiped away the beads of sweat upon her face, before replying:

"No; I have nothing to say."

"Have you an advocate to defend you, according to the rights of citizenship, which the Law allows?" added the Public Prosecutor.

Juliette would have replied at once; her mouth had already begun to frame the "No" with which she meant to answer.

But now at last had come Deroulede's hour. For this he had been silent, had suffered, and had held his peace during the twice twenty-four hours

that had passed wearily along since the arrest of the woman he loved.

In a moment he was on his feet before them all, accustomed to speak, to dominate, to command.

"Citizeness Juliette Marny has entrusted her defence to me," he said, even before the "No" had escaped Juliette's white lips, "and I am here to deny the charges brought against her, and to demand in the name of the people of France that she receive full justice and be set free."

CHAPTER XXV
THE DEFENCE

GREAT excitement and applause greeted Deroulede's statement.

"That's right! Go on, Déroulède! We want to hear Deroulede!" came from the crowded benches round the court; and men, women and children prepared themselves for a quarter of an hour's keen enjoyment. If Deroulede had anything to do with it, the trial was sure to end in excitement. And the people were always ready to listen to their special favourite.

The Citizen-Deputies, tired after the long day, seemed to rouse themselves to renewed interest. Lebrun, half-asleep, shook himself into wakefulness like a big dog. Robespierre smiled between his thin lips and looked across at Merlin. The unfriendliness between Merlin and Citizen Déroulède was well known, and everyone noted that the former wore a keen look of triumph.

High up on one of the topmost benches sat Citizen Lenoir. He looked down with obvious satisfaction at the scene which he himself had suggested the previous night and which had come to pass even as he had foretold. Merlin's sharp eyes had tried to pierce the gloom which wrapped the crowd of spectators, searching vainly to distinguish the broad figure of the giant.

Juliette had lost none of her calm, and there

was no one there sufficiently interested in her to notice the tinge of colour which, at the first word of Déroulède, had slowly mounted to her pale cheeks.

Tinville waited till the excitement had died down. Then he resumed:

"Then, Citizen Derouledé, what have *you* to say, why sentence should not be passed upon the accused?"

"I have to say that the accused is innocent of every charge brought against her," replied Derouledé firmly.

"And what proofs can you offer in support of your statement, Citizen-Deputy?" asked Tinville.

"The letters to which you refer, Citizen Tinville, did not belong to the accused, but to me. They consisted of certain communications which I desired to hold with Marie Antoinette, now a prisoner in the Conciergerie, during my stay there as Governor. The Citizeness Juliette Marny by denouncing me was serving the Republic, for my communications with Marie Antoinette related to my own hopes of seeing her leave this country and take refuge in her own native land."

Gradually, as Derouledé spoke, a murmur like the distant roar of the sea rose among the crowd on the upper benches. As he continued quietly and firmly, so it grew until his last words were drowned in one mighty, thunderous shout of anger.

Derouledé, the friend and idol of the people, the favourite of this unruly population, the father of the children, the friend of the women, the sympathiser in all their troubles—Papa Derouledé as the little ones called him—he, a traitor, self-accused, plotting and planning for that ex-tyrant Marie Antoinette! He, Derouledé, a traitor!

In one moment, as he spoke, their love was turned to hate. He had deceived them, laughed at them in secret, tried to bribe them by feeding their little ones! The bread of a traitor! It might have choked the children! He had been their idol, and now he had fallen they hated him as much as they had loved him before.

And this his enemies noted, and smiled with complete satisfaction.

The populace, that most changeable of all changeable things in this world, had turned all at once against its favourite. Lenoir had predicted this, and it had happened even more quickly than he had thought possible.

Deroulede had been given a length of rope, and he had already hanged himself.

The reality was now a mere matter of a few hours. To-morrow the guillotine; and the mob of Paris, who yesterday would have torn his enemies limb from limb, would on the morrow be dragging him to Revolution Square. This he knew well enough, but he stood up calmly, ready for any event, if only he succeeded in saving her from his own fate.

Juliette herself had remained motionless. The colour had again fled from her cheeks, leaving them paler than before. It seemed as if in this moment she suffered more than any human creature could bear.

He would not owe his life to her.

That was the one thought in her mind, which drove away all others. His love for her was dead, and he refused to accept the great sacrifice at her hands. And thus these two at the supreme moment of their lives saw each other, yet did not understand. A word, a touch, would have given them

both the key to one another's heart, but it now seemed as if death might part them for ever without their understanding.

The Public Prosecutor had been waiting until his voice could be heard above the noise, then he said:

"And is the court to understand, then, Citizen Deroulède, that it was you who tried to burn these treasonable letters and to destroy the case which contained them?"

"The letters were mine, and it was I who destroyed them."

"But the accused confessed to Citizen Merlin that she herself was trying to burn certain love-letters from a man of whom she did not wish you to know," said Tinville. The rope was perhaps not quite long enough; Deroulède must have all that could be given him.

Deroulède, however, instead of directing his reply straight to the Public Prosecutor, now turned towards the dense crowd of spectators on the benches opposite to him.

"Citizens, friends, brothers," he said warmly, "the accused is only a girl, young, innocent, knowing nothing of danger or of sin. She loves the Republic, the people of France, and feared that I, an unworthy representative of her sons, was planning treason against our country. Her first impulse was to stop me before I committed the awful crime, to punish me, or perhaps only to warn me. That was the meaning of her denunciation. But does a young girl calculate, citizens? No, she acts as her heart dictates and without thought of consequences. Then, when the act is done come regret and pity. Is that a crime? She wished to oppose me in my treason; then, seeing me in peril, sympathy

gained the upper hand. She loved my mother, who might be losing a son; she loved my crippled foster-sister; for *their* sakes, not for mine—a traitor's—did she wish to save me from the consequences of my own folly. Was that a crime, citizens? She took my guilt upon herself, was ready to sacrifice herself and to stand here before you all as a criminal. She has already suffered for the noble lie which she has told on my behalf, but you, citizens of France, who are above all noble and generous, will allow her to suffer no longer."

They listened to him without interruption, and now at last, when he paused, it was evident that popular feeling went out to the prisoner with sympathy. His appeal to their honour and generosity roused all the finer feelings within them. Still hating him, his words had turned their hearts towards her. If Juliette's fate could have been decided at that moment by the voices of the crowd, she would have been at once set free.

While Déroulède had been speaking, Merlin once or twice looked towards his friend Fouquier-Tinville, but the Public Prosecutor sat at his desk with his face in deep shadow, chin resting on hand, staring before him with an expression of indifference.

Now, when Deroulede had finished, he rose slowly to his feet, and said quietly:

"And will you tell the court, Citizen-Deputy, why you are so ready to accuse yourself publicly of treason against the Republic, knowing full well what the result for you must be?"

"Would any Frenchman care to save his own life and leave a woman to suffer unjust punishment?"

A murmur of approval greeted these words. Tinville continued:

"Quite so, quite so. And do you tell the court that the accused knew nothing of the papers which you say you destroyed?"

"She knew nothing of them. I destroyed them. I did not know that they had been found. On my return to my house I discovered that Citizeness Juliette Marny had falsely accused herself of secretly destroying some papers."

"She said they were love-letters."

"It is false."

"If it be false, Citizen Deroulede," continued Tinville, "then how does it happen that the letters which you admit were treasonable were found burnt, and still smoking, in Juliette's Marny's bedroom, and the torn letter-case concealed among the dresses in her bag?"

"It is false."

"The Minister of Justice, Citizen Merlin, can answer for the truth of that."

"It is the truth," said Juliette quietly.

Deroulede was silent now.

This one simple fact he did not know. Anne Mie, in telling him how Juliette had been arrested, had omitted to give him this detail that the burnt letters were found in Juliette's bedroom. Up to the moment when the Public Prosecutor had put this question to him, Deroulede had thought that she had destroyed the papers and the letter-case in the study, where she had remained alone after Merlin and his men had left the room. She could easily have burnt them there, for a small lamp was always kept alight on a side table for the use of smokers.

This little fact now altered the whole course of

the trial. Tinville turned towards the crowd of spectators on the benches:

“Citizens of France, see how you are being deceived and fooled!”

Then he turned once more to Déroulède.

“Citizen Deroulede,” he began——

But amid the howls and curses that followed his words could no longer be heard. The hearts of the crowd which had for a moment been softened towards Juliette by Deroulede’s speech swiftly changed their sympathy to hatred and rage. Two people had fooled them, and one of these they had loved and trusted. He and his lover, that pale-faced aristo, had for weeks now, months, years perhaps, plotted against the Republic, and during those months and years he had talked to them and they had listened, he had deceived them with his eloquent tongue, with his bread and his hospital for their children.

The noise and shouting were increasing. The crowd rushed down from the benches, over one another’s heads, over children’s fallen bodies, in an effort to get at him and the girl to tear them to pieces. They snarled like wild beasts, the women shrieked, the children cried, and the soldiers of the National Guard, hurrying forward, had great difficulty in keeping them back. The President wildly rang his bell, and his voice, trembling with excitement, was heard one or twice above the uproar:

“Clear the court! Clear the court!”

But the people refused to be cleared out of the court.

“Death to the traitors! Hang them! Death to Deroulede! A rope for the aristo!”

And in the thick of the crowd the broad shoulders

and massive head of Citizen Lenoir towered above the others. At first he seemed to be urging on the mob in its fury. His voice, with its broad northern accent, could be heard distinctly shouting loud curses against the accused; but at a certain moment when the tumult was at its height, when the National Guard began to think that even their bayonets could not stop this pushing, struggling crowd, Lenoir seemed to change his mind.

"Stop! Stop! This is stupid!" he shouted loudly. "We shall do far better with the traitors when we get them outside. What say you, citizens? Shall we leave the judges here to finish this nonsense, and arrange for a more sensible conclusion ourselves out in the streets?"

At first but little heed was paid to his suggestion, and he repeated it once or twice, adding some interesting details:

"One is freer in the streets, where these monkeys of the National Guard can't get between the people of France and their just revenge. By God!" he added, squaring his broad shoulders and pushing his way through the crowd towards the door, "I for one am going to look for the most suitable place for a rope. Come on, my friends, let's hang them with our own hands."

Like a flock of sheep the crowd now began to follow him.

"To the street!" they shouted. "To the street! Hang them with our own hands! A rope for the traitors!"

And the greater number of the spectators, cursing loudly against the enemies of the Republic, began to make their way out into the street. A few only remained to see the conclusion of the trial.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE FRUCTIDOR RIOTS

THERE have been many descriptions, more or less true, of the events known to history as the "Fructidor Riots." But this is how they were described a few days later in England to the Prince of Wales by Sir Percy Blakeney; and who, indeed, should know better than the Scarlet Pimpernel himself?

Deroulede and Juliette Marny were the last of the prisoners who were tried on that memorable day of Fructidor. There had been such a large number that all the covered carts used for taking the prisoners to and from the Hall of Justice had already been sent away with their human loads. Thus it was that only a rough, open, wooden cart remained, and into this Deroulede and Juliette were ordered to mount.

It was now almost nine o'clock in the evening, and a thin, misty rain had begun to fall. The streets of Paris, unlighted except for the oil lamps hanging on wires slung across from house to house, presented a gloomy and miserable appearance.

The Hall of Justice was surrounded by a howling and shrieking mob, which, having drunk up all the brandy in the neighbouring drinking-shops, was now waiting outside in the rain for the purpose of taking vengeance with its own hands on the man whom it had once loved, but whom it now

hated. Men, women and even children swarmed round the principal entrances, along the bank of the river as far as the bridge, and up towards the Luxembourg Prison to which the condemned would no doubt be taken.

Along the river-bank, and immediately facing the Hall of Justice, a row of gallows-shaped posts, at intervals of a hundred yards or more, held each a smoky oil lamp at a height of some eight feet from the ground. One of these lamps had been knocked down, and from the post itself there hung now a length of rope with a noose at the end. Around this a group of women, their ragged clothes soaked through with the rain, sat in the mud awaiting the victim, whilst the men, restless and noisy, rushed aimlessly hither and thither, fearful lest their prey should be taken away before their vengeance was satisfied.

Oh, how they hated him now! Citizen Lenoir, with his powerful shoulders and grime-covered head, towered above the crowd. The darkness of the street and the mist which obscured the light from the dim oil lamps made it impossible to see him, but his harsh voice could be heard distinctly above the noise, now here, now there, urging on the men, shouting to the women, stirring up hatred against the prisoners. He seemed to consider it as his own special task to persuade the populace to do some terrible deed of revenge against their enemies.

As Deroulede came out into the open, the light from a swinging lamp in the doorway fell full upon his face. The foremost of the crowd recognised him; a howl of anger went up to the sky, and a hundred fists were raised threateningly against him. It seemed as if they wished to tear him to pieces.

“Hang him! Hang him! The traitor!”

He shivered slightly, as if with the cold, damp air, but he stepped quietly into the cart, followed closely by Juliette.

The soldiers of the National Guard under Commandant Santerre had great difficulty in keeping back the mob. It was not the wish of the Government to allow the people to deal out justice with their own hands in the streets; the public executions in Revolution Square were thought to be a good example to other would-be traitors. So Citizen Santerre, the military commandant of Paris, had ordered his men to make way for the prisoners even with the use of their bayonets if necessary and, further, he ordered his drummers to beat a loud roll in case Deroulede should try to speak to the crowd.

But Deroulede had no such intention. He was occupied chiefly in shielding Juliette from the cold. She had been made to sit in the cart beside him, and he had taken off his coat and was wrapping it round her as a protection against the penetrating rain.

The eye-witnesses of these memorable events have declared that at a certain moment he looked up suddenly with a curious, eager expression in his eyes, and then raised himself in the cart and seemed to be trying to pierce the gloom around him, as if in search for a face, or perhaps a voice.

"Hang them! The traitors! Hang them!" was the continual cry of the mob.

Up to now, with the outer walls of the Hall of Justice as a protection behind them, the soldiers of the National Guard had found it fairly easy work to keep back the crowd; but there came a time when the cart was obliged to move out into the open in order to take the prisoners along the

Palace Street up to the Luxembourg Prison. This task, however, had become more and more difficult every moment. The crowd was mad with rage at seeing its desires prevented by a few soldiers. Only the women who sat around the gallows had not moved from their position; one of them was quietly arranging the rope which had got out of place. The rest of the crowd surged round the cart, threatening the soldiers who stood between them and the object of their fury. It seemed as if nothing now could save Déroulède and Juliette from an immediate and horrible death.

“Death to the traitors! A rope! A rope! Hang them with our own hands!”

Santerre himself, who was unable to make his voice heard above the noise, was at a loss what to do. He had already sent one man to the nearest barracks for more soldiers, but these would still be some time coming; and meanwhile his men were getting exhausted, and the crowd, more and more excited, seemed likely to break the line at every moment. There was not another second to be lost.

Santerre himself was for letting the crowd have its own way, and he would willingly have thrown to it the prey for which it was crying; but he had his orders and it would be dangerous to disobey.

At this supreme moment of difficulty he suddenly felt a respectful touch on his arm. Close behind him a soldier of the National Guard—not one of his own men—was standing at attention, holding a small folded paper in his hand.

“It is sent to you by the Minister of Justice,” whispered the soldier hurriedly. “The Citizen-Deputies have watched the tumult from the Hall; they say you must not lose a moment.”

Santerre moved back to the side of the cart where a rough stable lantern had been fixed. He took the paper from the soldier's hand and, hastily tearing it open, read it by the dim light of the lantern. As he read, a look of keen satisfaction came over his face.

"You have two more men with you?" he asked quickly.

"Yes, citizen," replied the man, pointing towards his right, "and the Minister said you would give me two more."

"You understand what you have to do? You must take the prisoners quietly across to the Temple Prison."

"Yes, citizen. Citizen Merlin has given me full instructions. He says that you can have the cart drawn back more into the shadow, where the prisoners can be made to descend, then they can be given into my care. You in the meantime are to stay here with your men round the empty cart as long as you can. Extra men will soon be here to give you the help you need. When they arrive you are to move along with the cart as if you were going to the Luxembourg Prison. This will give me time to deliver the prisoners safely at the Temple."

The man spoke hurriedly, and Santerre was only too ready to obey. He was glad to be rid of the responsibility of conducting such troublesome prisoners.

The cart was drawn back into the deepest shadow, and while the mob were howling their loudest, Deroulede and Juliette were ordered to step out. No one saw them, for it was darker there, and the mist was growing thicker.

"Follow quietly!" whispered a rough voice in

their ears, "or my orders are to shoot you where you stand."

But the order was unnecessary. Neither of them had any wish for resistance. Juliette, cold and numb, was clinging to Deroulède, who had placed round her his protecting arm. Santerre had ordered two of his men to join the new escort of the prisoners, and presently the small party, keeping close to the long walls of the Hall of Justice, began to walk rapidly away from the scene of the riot. Déroulède noticed that some half-dozen men seemed to be surrounding himself and Juliette, but beyond that he could see nothing. The blackness of the night had become still more dense, and in the distance the cries of the crowd grew fainter and fainter.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE UNEXPECTED

THE small party walked on in silence. It seemed to consist of a very few men of the National Guard, whom Santerre had placed under the command of the soldier who had carried to him the orders of the Citizen-Deputies.

Juliette and Deroulede wondered whither they were being led; perhaps to some other prison, they thought, away from the fury of the populace. They were conscious of a feeling of satisfaction at being freed from that pack of wild beasts. Beyond that they cared nothing. Both felt already the shadow of death hovering over them. The great moment of their lives had come, and had found them side by side. Juliette held out her hand and sought that of the man she loved. There was not one word spoken between them, not even a murmur. Deroulede understood all that her hand wished to convey to him. In a moment everything was forgotten save the joy of this touch. Death, or fear of death, ceased to exist. In the hearts of both there was perfect peace, almost perfect happiness. There was neither doubt nor anything to forgive. He no longer thought: "She does not love me—or how could she have betrayed me?" And she knew that he had forgiven—or rather that he had nothing to forgive, for Love is perfect understanding—and judges not.

And so they followed their escort wherever it chose to lead them.

They had now turned away from the river and were going along the silent deserted street in which was situated Citizen Brogard's inn, where Sir Percy Blakeney lodged. As they neared the place, Deroulede found himself vaguely wondering what had become of his English friend. The latter had promised to do what he could, but it would need more than the cleverness of the Scarlet Pimpernel to get two noted prisoners out of Paris that night. Even if——

“Halt!”

The word of command rang out clearly and distinctly. Deroulede threw up his head and listened. Something strange and unaccountable in that same word of command had struck his sensitive ear.

Yet the party had halted, and there was a sound as of bayonets or of muskets levelled ready to fire.

All had happened in less than a few seconds. The next moment there was a loud cry:

“This way, Deroulede! 'Tis the Scarlet Pimpernel!”

A blow from an unseen hand had knocked down and extinguished the nearest street lamp. Deroulede felt that he and Juliette were being hastily dragged through a doorway even as the cheery voice echoed along the narrow street. Then half a dozen men were struggling together in the mud. It seemed as if the men of the National Guard had fallen upon one another, and had it not been for the sound of English oaths, Deroulede and Juliette would have been slower to understand.

“Well done, Tony! Splendid, Ffoulkes! By gad, that was a good bit of work!”

The lazy, pleasant voice was unmistakable, but where on earth did it come from?

Of one thing there could be no doubt. The two men sent by Santerre were lying on their backs on the ground, whilst the three other soldiers were busy fastening them with ropes.

What did it all mean?

“Well, friend Deroulede! You did not think, I hope, that I was going to leave you and Mademoiselle Juliette to your fate?”

And there close behind them stood the tall figure of the blood-thirsty Citizen Lenoir. They gazed and gazed, then looked again, hardly daring to trust their eyes. From the face of Lenoir two merry blue eyes were regarding them with amusement.

“I do look a dirty, miserable object, I know,” said he at last, “but it was the only way to get those devils to do what I wanted. But you are amongst friends now, mademoiselle.”

Juliette looked up. Her eyes, now swimming in tears, sought those of the brave man who had so nobly stood by her and the man she loved.

“Blakeney——” began Deroulede.

But Sir Percy quickly interrupted him.

“Hush, man! We have but a few moments. Remember you are in Paris still, and God only knows how we shall get out of this murderous city to-night. I have said that you and Mademoiselle Juliette are among friends. That is all for the moment. I had to get you together, or I should have failed. I could plan but one rescue, and I had to use the best means at my command to have you condemned together. Indeed!” he added, with a laugh, “my friend Tinville will not be pleased when he realises that Citizen Lenoir has

dragged the Citizen-Deputies by the nose."

While he was speaking, he led Deroulede and Juliette into a dark and narrow room on the ground floor, and presently he called loudly for Brogard, the landlord of this dismal, uninviting inn.

"Brogard!" he shouted. "Where is that ass Brogard? Quickly, man," he added as Citizen Brogard, his pockets full of English gold, came along, "where do you hide your ugly face? Here, another length of rope for the soldiers. Bring them in here and pour that drink down their throats as I have told you. That will keep them quiet for ten hours. They'll come to no harm, and can do us no mischief."

And so he chattered on merrily, giving Deroulede and Juliette time to recover from their surprise.

The change from despair to hope had been so sudden. It had all happened in less than three minutes. The struggle outside had been short and sudden. The two soldiers of Santerre had been taken by surprise and the three young assistants of the Scarlet Pimpernel had fallen upon them so vigorously that they had hardly had time to utter a cry of "Help!" Moreover, that cry would have been useless. The night was dark and wet, and those citizens who felt ready for excitement were busy at the Hall of Justice, a mile and a half away. One or two heads had appeared at the windows of the houses opposite, but it was too dark to see anything, and the sounds of fighting had very quickly died away.

All was silent now in the street, and in the grimy coffee-room of the inn the two soldiers of the National Guard were lying bound and unconscious, whilst three others were gaily laughing and wiping

their rain-covered faces and hands. In the midst of them stood the tall figure of the bold adventurer who had planned the rescue.

"Well, we've got so far, friends, haven't we?" he said, "and now for the future. We must all be out of Paris to-night, or it will be the guillotine for all of us to-morrow."

He spoke gaily, but there was an undertone of earnestness in his voice, and his lieutenants looked up at him, ready to obey him in all things, knowing that danger was ahead.

Lord Anthony Dewhurst, Sir Andrew Ffoulkes and Lord Hastings, dressed as soldiers of the National Guard, had played their part perfectly. It was Lord Hastings who had presented the order to Santerre, and the three young adventurers, at the word of command from their chief, had fallen upon the two men whom the commandant of Paris had sent to look after the prisoners.

So far all was well. But how to get out of Paris? Everyone looked to the Scarlet Pimpernel for guidance.

Sir Percy now turned to Juliette and bowed:

"Mademoiselle de Marny," he said, "allow me to conduct you to a room which, though unworthy, will nevertheless enable you to rest quietly for a few minutes, whilst I give my friend Déroulède further advice and instructions. In the room you will find a disguise which I beg you to put on with all haste. Indeed, they are filthy rags, but your life, and ours too, depend upon your help."

He kissed the tips of her fingers, and opened the door of an adjoining room to allow her to pass through. As soon as the door had closed upon her, he once more turned to the others.

"Those uniforms will not do now," he said.

"There are some bundles of clothes here, Tony. Will you all put them on as quickly as you can. We must look as filthy a band of cut-throats to-night as ever walked the streets of Paris."

The four men hastily obeyed. Lord Anthony Dewhurst—generally considered as one of the best-dressed men in London society—had brought from a cupboard a bundle of clothes, mere rags, filthy but useful. Within ten minutes the change was made, and four ragged, dirty figures stood before their chief.

"Excellent!" said Sir Percy. "Now for Mademoiselle de Marny."

Hardly had he spoken when the door of the adjoining room was pushed open, and a horrible sight met their eyes: a woman in a filthy bodice and skirt, her face covered with grime, her yellow, greasy hair thrust under a dirty and crumpled cap.

A shout of delight greeted Juliette's appearance. Now that she felt she had an important part to play, she found all her energy and spirits. She realised that noble friends were risking their lives for the man she loved and for herself. Of herself she did not think; she only remembered that her presence of mind, all her physical and mental strength, would be needed to carry their plans to a successful end. One look at the perfection of her disguise was sufficient to assure the leader that his instructions would be carried out to the letter.

The four men stood waiting together with Juliette, whilst Sir Percy gave them his final orders.

"We'll mix with the crowd," he said "and do as the crowd does. It is for us to ensure that the crowd does what we want. Mademoiselle de Marny, your disguise is perfect. I must beg you to take hold of my friend Derouledé's hand and



A SHOUT OF DELIGHT GREETED JULIETTE'S APPEARANCE

not to let go of it for any reason whatever. But that is not a difficult task, I think," he added, with a smile "and yours, Deroulede, is equally easy. I give Mademoiselle Juliette into your care. On no account must you leave her side until we are out of Paris."

"Out of Paris!" said Deroulede, with an anxious sigh.

"Yes," replied Sir Percy boldly; "out of Paris with a howling mob at our heels. And above all, friends, remember that our call is the shrill cry of the sea-gull three times repeated. Follow it until you are outside the gates of Paris. Once there, listen for it again. It will lead you to freedom and safety at last. Yes! Outside Paris, with the help of God! And now let us go," said Blakeney finally. "That ass Santerre by now will have told the crowd that they have been tricked. They'll be on their way to the Temple Prison to find their prey. We'll follow them. Come, friends; and remember the sea-bird's cry."

Deroulede drew Juliette's hand in his.

"We are ready," he said.

Then the five men, with Juliette in their midst, went out into the street once more.

CHAPTER XXVIII
PERE LACHAISE

It was not difficult to guess which way the crowd had gone; the shouting could be heard from the farther side of the river.

Citizen Santerre had been unable to keep back the mob until the arrival of the soldiers from the barracks. Five minutes after Déroulède and Juliette had been taken away the mob had broken through the line of soldiers, only to find the cart empty and the prey disappeared.

"They are safe in the Temple by now!" shouted Santerre in savage triumph.

At first it seemed as if the fury of the crowd, cheated of vengeance, would direct itself against the commandant and his soldiers; for a moment even Santerre's red cheeks had turned pale at this unexpected danger. Then just as suddenly a new cry was raised:

"To the Temple!"

"To the Temple! To the Temple!" came in ready response.

The cry was soon taken up by the entire crowd, and in less than two minutes the neighbourhood of the Hall of Justice was deserted, whilst the people, still yelling their curses against the traitors, swarmed along the north bank of the river towards the prison.

Sir Percy Blakeney and his five followers on their way from Brogard's inn had found the new

bridge and the adjoining streets deserted, except for a few of the crowd who, their enthusiasm chilled by the rain, were returning miserably to their homes. So the ragged little group attracted little or no attention, and Sir Percy boldly spoke to every passer-by.

"The way to the Temple Prison, citizen?" he asked once or twice, or

"Have they hanged the traitor yet? Can you tell me, citizeness?"

A grunt or a curse was the usual reply, but no one took any further notice.

At the corner of one of the cross streets leading into the street where the Temple was situated, Blakeney suddenly turned to his followers

"We are close now," he said in a whisper, and speaking in English. "You must all get into the thick of the crowd as soon as possible. We'll meet again outside the prison—and remember the sea-gull's cry."

He did not wait for an answer, and presently disappeared in the mist.

Already the shouting could be distinctly heard and the number of people in the street was gradually increasing. The mob had evidently assembled in the great square outside the prison and was loudly demanding that the objects of its anger should be given up to the people's vengeance.

The moment for cool-headed action was at hand. The Scarlet Pimpernel had planned the whole thing, but it was for his followers and for those whom he was trying to rescue from certain death to help him heart and soul.

Deroulede held Juliette's hand.

"Are you frightened, my beloved?" he whispered.

"Not whilst you are near me," she murmured in reply.

A few minutes later they were in the thick of the mob. Sir Andrew Ffoulkes, Lord Anthony Dewhurst and Lord Hastings, the three Englishmen, were in front; Derouledé and Juliette immediately behind them. The crowd itself carried them along—a crowd soaked through with rain, drunk with brandy and with their own rage. Everyone was shouting, the women louder than the rest; one of them was carrying the length of rope which it was hoped might still be useful.

"Give us the traitors! Hang them! Hang them! A rope for the traitors!"

And Derouledé, holding Juliette by the hand, shouted with them.

"Hang them! A rope for the traitors!"

Sir Andrew Ffoulkes turned and laughed. It was good sport for these young fellows. They pushed and elbowed their way forward and followed the crowd, urging and encouraging those around, cursing and yelling louder than any of them. For did not that very crowd offer them their great hope of safety? As well have sought for a needle in a haystack as for two escaped prisoners in this surging multitude.

The large open space in front of the Temple Prison was black with people. The darkness was thick here, and the few lanterns fixed to the big gate and walls of the prison threw very little light into the square. As the little band composed of the three Englishmen and Derouledé, holding Juliette's hand, came into the open space, they heard a shrill cry like that of the sea-gull thrice repeated; then a rough voice shouting from out of the darkness

“By God! I’ll not believe that the prisoners are in the Temple now! It is my belief, friends, that we have been fooled once more!”

That voice of Citizen Lenoir, with its northern accent, rose high above the almost deafening noise; his suggestion was received with renewed shouts of wildest anger, and the great crowd advanced upon the huge and frowning prison. Pushing, yelling, the women screaming, the men cursing, it seemed as if the events of that great day five years before—the 14th of July—were to be repeated, that the Temple was going to share the fate of the Bastille.

Obedient to their leader’s orders, the three young Englishmen remained in the thick of the crowd. Together with Deroulede they were able to form a strong protecting wall around Juliette. Away on the right the sea-gull’s cry from time to time gave them strength and encouragement.

The foremost of the crowd had now reached the gates of the prison and were loudly demanding that the Governor should come forth; but no one appeared. The huge gates with their strong bars and hinges remained silent and defiant.

Then the voice was heard again

“By God! The prisoners are not in the Temple! The fools have allowed them to escape. They are afraid to tell us the truth. They are afraid to come out and face the anger of the people!”

It was strange how easily the crowd took up the new idea. Word went round with marvellous rapidity:

“The prisoners have escaped! Did you hear that? The prisoners have escaped!”

Some were for proceeding with their first idea of attacking the Temple, but they were not many.

The dark, frowning buildings had an air of quiet strength. Besides, it was by daylight that the Bastille had been attacked five years before; that effort might not have been so successful on a pitch-black night such as this, when one could not see one's hand before one's eyes and the rain went through to the skin.

"Perhaps they've got through one of the barriers by now!" suggested a voice from out of the darkness.

"The barriers! The barriers!" came the sheep-like echo.

The little group of friends tightened their hold of one another.

They had understood at last.

"It is for us to ensure that the crowd does what we want," the Scarlet Pimpernel had said.

He wanted it to take him and his friends out of Paris, and it seemed that he was going to succeed.

Juliette's heart beat fast and her little hand gripped Deroulede's fingers in her excitement.

"To the barriers! To the barriers!"

Like a herd of wild horses, driven by the whip of the herdsman, the mob began to scatter in all directions. Not knowing what it wanted, not knowing what it would find, half-forgetting the cause and object of its anger, it made one great rush for the gates of the city through which the prisoners were supposed to have escaped.

The three Englishmen and Déroulède, with Juliette well protected in their midst, had not joined the general rush as yet. The crowd in the square before the prison was still very thick, and the streets branching outwards from it were very narrow. Through these the multitude, like a human torrent, rushed headlong towards the bar-

riers. They ran, knocking each other down, pushing the weaker ones on one side, trampling others underfoot; but they were ready to pick themselves up again after any number of falls; the mud was soft to fall upon and those who did the trampling had no shoes on their feet. They rushed out from the dark open square into streets darker still. On they ran—on! on!—some north, some south, some east, some west.

But it was from the east that came the sea-gull's cry.

So Deroulede and his friends ran boldly towards the east. Down the Street of the Republic they followed their leader's call. The crowd was very thick there. The Ménilmontant barrier was not far away. It was the nearest gate to the Temple Prison, and beyond it lay the cemetery of Pere Lachaise.

In a quarter of an hour Menilmontant was reached.

The great gates of the city were guarded by companies of the National Guard, each under the command of an officer. The companies were at most twenty strong—and what was that against such a crowd.

At every gate to the north and east of the city there was now a mob of some four or five thousand strong, wanting it knew not what. Everyone had forgotten what it was that had caused him or her to rush on so blindly, so madly towards the nearest barrier; but everyone knew that he or she wanted to get through that barrier, to attack the soldiers that stood in their way, to knock down the captain of the guard. With a wild cry every city gate was attacked. Like a huge wave, the populace on that memorable night of Fructidor broke against the line of soldiers that vainly tried to keep it back.

The National Guard was powerless; the officers could offer but feeble resistance. The few shots, which in the darkness did very little harm, had only the effect of still further angering the crowd. Within half an hour the people of Paris was outside its own gates. Victory was complete the officers had surrendered; the mighty mob had its own way.

But the thin rain had now turned to a downpour with occasional distant thunder and flashes of lightning; and with victory came weariness—tired bodies, wet skins, muddy feet and throats dry with continual shouting.

Outside the Ménilmontant gate, where the crowd had been thickest, there now stretched before this tired, excited throng the vast cemetery of Pere Lachaise, dark, dismal and deserted, with its great avenues of gloomy monuments and cedar trees. The silent majesty of this city of the dead seemed to frown upon the passions of humanity. The flashes of lightning seemed to reveal ghostlike processions of the long-dead heroes of France wandering silently among the tombs.

The crowd turned with a shudder away from this vast place of eternal peace.

From within the cemetery gates there was suddenly heard the sound of a sea-gull calling to its mate, and five dark figures one by one separated themselves from the crowd and quietly entered the grounds of Pere Lachaise through a break in the wall close to the main entrance.

Once more the sea-gull's cry.

Within the gates all was silent. The soft, wet earth gave forth no echo of the footsteps of the five figures as they followed the call which would lead them to freedom.

CHAPTER XXIX

CONCLUSION

THERE is but little else to record.

History has told us how the crowd of Paris, tired and wet, quietly went back to their homes even before the first cock-crow in the villages beyond the gates greeted the pale light of dawn.

But long before that, even before the bells of the great city had struck the midnight hour, Sir Percy Blakeney and his friends, like six silent ghosts, had reached the inn which stands close to the farthest gate of Pere Lachaise. Gold had easily purchased silence and goodwill from the keeper of this way-side inn. A huge travelling-coach stood in readiness and four good horses had been waiting impatiently for the past half-hour. From the window of the coach old Petronelle was watching, her face wet with anxious tears.

A cry of joy and surprise escaped from Deroulede and Juliette, and both turned to express their gratitude towards the man who had planned and carried through this bold adventure.

"My friend," said Sir Percy, speaking more especially to Deroulede, "if only you knew how simple it all was! Money can do so many things, and fortunately I possess plenty of that. You told me yourself how you had provided for old Petronelle. By giving my solemn promise that she would meet her young mistress here, I persuaded her to leave Paris. She came out quite boldly this morn-

ing in one of the market carts and is so obviously a woman of the people that no one suspected her. As for this innkeeper and his wife, they have been well paid, and money soon obtains a coach and horses. My English friends and I have our own passports and also one for Mademoiselle Juliette, who must travel as an English lady with her old nurse, Pétronelle. There are some decent clothes waiting for us all in the inn. A quarter of an hour in which to put them on, and then we must be on our way. You can use your own passport, of course. Your arrest has been so sudden that news of it can hardly yet have left Paris, and we have eight hours' start of our enemies. They'll wake up to-morrow morning and find that you have slipped through their fingers."

Derouledé could say nothing. His heart was too full of gratitude towards his friend to express it all in words.

And time, of course, was precious.

Within a quarter of an hour the little band had thrown off their rags and now appeared dressed as respectable citizens. Sir Percy had put on the uniform of the coachman of a well-to-do English family, whilst Lord Anthony Dewhurst wore that of an English servant. Five minutes later Derouledé lifted Juliette into the coach. Sir Andrew Ffoulkes and Lord Hastings joined them inside; Lord Anthony sat next to Sir Percy on the driver's box. And while the crowd of Paris was still wondering why it had stormed the gates of the city, the escaped prisoners were carried swiftly along the roads of France northward to the coast.

They had an eight hours' start, and the League of the Scarlet Pimpernel had done its work thoroughly. Well provided with passports, and

with fresh horses awaiting them at every station of fifty miles or so, the journey, though tiring, was free from dangerous incidents.

At Le Havre they went on board Sir Percy Blake-ney's yacht the *Daydream*, where they met Madame Deroulede and Anne Mie. The two ladies acting under the instructions of Sir Percy had, as originally arranged, continued their journey northwards to the seaport.

Anne Mie's first meeting with Juliette was most pitiful. She had believed Juliette dead and Paul in despair, and her kindly soul ached when she remembered that it was she who in her jealousy had given the most deadly stab to the heart of the man she loved. And when one glance at Paul Déroulède's face told her that she was forgiven, her joy at seeing him happy beside his beloved was un-mixed with any bitterness.

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It was in the beautiful dawn of one of the last days of that memorable Fructidor, when Juliette and Paul Deroulede, standing together on the deck of the *Daydream*, saw the shores of France gradually disappearing from their view. It was the first time that they were quite alone, the first time that all thought of danger had become a mere dream.

What had the future in store for them in the land to which the graceful yacht was swiftly bearing them?

They looked towards the north where, still hidden beneath the horizon, lay the white cliffs of England, whilst the mist even now was veiling the shores of the land where they had suffered and where they had learned to love.

